THE SOUL-WINNER'S GOSPEL

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The Soul-Winner's Gospel

The Saving Doctrines of the Gospel of John, interpreted and applied in personal work with resultant conversions

By
GERRIT SNYDER
With Introduction by
ANDREW C. ZENOS, D.D.

TC
N.T. John
Evangelism, personal

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INTRODUCTION

Christianity and evangelism are inseparable. In its first form the Christian religion was a Gospel — an Evangel, a message of Good News. The Great Commission is a command to evangelize. The earliest church was the offspring of evangelism and the mother of evangelists. In the nature of the case the Apostolic community could know of no other way of propagating and growing than by evangelistic effort. And every Christian was expected to be, and was, an evangelist.

The time came, however, when a new class of persons arose for the Church to take hold of and Christianize, viz., her own children. To these the Evangel was no new thing. They could not be evangelized as their parents were. They must be nurtured and trained in the faith received from believing fathers and mothers. Thus arose Christian nurture, after evangelism. But it did not supersede it. The evangelist still went forth outside of the Christian community to tell men of God's love through Jesus Christ.

When the Christian state made its appearance, evangelism was differentiated into two types, that which aimed to bring the non-Christian masses within the state to Christ, and that which was di-

rected towards converting the pagan world. That is the distinction perpetuated to the present day under the new phrases home missions and foreign missions. Meantime, changes have taken place. New social conditions have developed. The great city disappeared for a time, only to reappear in a more formidable aspect and complexion. Movements and interminglings of populations and races have taken place. But the impulse to evangelize continues and the command "to make disciples of all the nations" is still binding. Evangelism has accordingly developed new methods; it has made a new history for itself. Every devout soul which has had wisdom given and has gathered experience in the endeavor to impart the gift of divine life to others, owes it to contribute to the development of the new evangelism.

The author of this little book is one of those who have been favored with success in personal evangelism, and he aims to help others as he himself has been helped in this work. The book is characterized by simplicity and directness. He is no advocate of an elaborate method in conducting a campaign. System and thoroughness are perfectly compatible with simplicity and directness. Doctor Snyder returns to the ways of the Apostolic age when each soul, set aflame by the love of Christ, went out to kindle other souls, when the press agent and the great tabernacle and the trained chorus had as yet not made their appearances. These are all

good, but the older way still has its charm and power.

The book is further characterized by the positive and constructive note. Frequently the evangelist of our days makes his appearance in the community in the controversial temper. He opens his campaign by an attack on organized traditional Christianity. Doctor Snyder evidently believes in pressing to the winning of souls by a direct approach to them. Organized and institutional Christianity in no way stands in his path. His whole attitude is that of the man so intent on winning souls that he sees no one and nothing else.

The book has another characteristic. It is the pastoral temper of the writer. The author has an eye not only to the gathering of the unconverted, but to their conservation and development after they have been induced to cross the threshold of the Church. His experience as pastor of churches has quickened within his heart the sense of the need of fellowship and guidance of the newly evangelized.

It is a wholesome view of the subject and will help to advance the cause in whose interest it is set forth.

ANDREW C. ZENOS.

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PREFACE.

The last quarter of the last century stands out in the minds of Christian people as one of the great revival periods in the history of the Christian church. The opening of the new century is less marked by such a deep, universal, spiritual movement. The meager results and the reaction at times of special evangelistic meetings have raised the question whether the old type of revival is not a thing of the past. If it is, what is to take its place? Will social service? Will education? These never can be a substitute for true evangelism. Unless the church grows from the constant inflow of a divine life there is nothing to keep it from sinking into a deadly indifference and formalism. If the evangelistic note is to be no longer sounded in our preaching, if we are to witness no more clear cases of conversion, the church as an institution may well ask for herself the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

But those who believe that Christianity is a life — ever-flowing underneath the surface, often in hidden depths, having many channels but giving preponderance now to one and then to another, finding often new ways of expression — need not despair of the future. True Christianity is a permanent

river whose course may be diverted, but whose life-giving waters will never cease flowing. There is, however, a growing conviction, which the writer shares with others, that for permanency and wholesomeness the broad stream of the past evangelism must be directed more into separate channels, upon single, unproductive spots. It has never forsaken these channels, but by reason of its broad expanse, some have gotten the impression that no good is being accomplished except through wholesale, evangelistic methods. The rivulets of individual activity and influence have been obscured. Each church needs to realize again the value of its own irrigating ditches. The local church must fall back again upon its own resources, direct its own energies, and become its own soul-winning agency. Each pastor must have the evangelistic spirit. He must instruct and train his Sunday school teachers and others in personal work. The evangelism of the future must be more personal, local, educational, persistent. Its spirit, fervor, and fire will not differ from that of the past, but the evangelistic consecration must take the form of concentration in each local church. All Christians must become imbued with a passion for souls. As in the early church, each professing Christian must become Christ's witness, worker, warrior. No matter what means may be used to bring large numbers under the influence of the Gospel, and how the public discourse is needed to urge the acceptance of its

overtures, the individual must never be lost in the mass. "In the temple of God, each brick must be handled separately." The world must be brought to Christ by units.

It is the writer's purpose in this little book to show how that in a soul-saving work, the Gospel of John is pre-eminently the text-book and guide. It is a weapon which never wears out, and is never out of date. For this reason it is here called THE SOUL-WINNER'S GOSPEL.

The writer's chief aim has been to furnish a clear setting of the saving truths of the Gospel, with incidents showing how the Holy Spirit blesses those truths in convictions and conversions, if His help and guidance are sought. It is especially designed for young Christians who desire to be used of God in the salvation of others. The book, however, will measurably fail in its purpose, if persons who come into the possession thereof content themselves merely with a hasty reading of its pages, as if it were a story book. If it has any value, it should be regarded as a brief introductory text book on the divine art of soul-winning. Its perusal should be accompanied with a special study of John's Gospel, memorizing its precious passages. In that way alone will its truths become a life-long acquisition of knowledge and equipment for service.

While pastors and experienced Christian workers may find little that is new or striking in the following chapters, it is, nevertheless, the writer's

hope that by its reading their faith may be strengthened in the efficacy of God's Word and in the promised guidance of His Spirit. May it awaken a desire to become, above all things, "fishers of men." In that work we can always be assured of the sympathy and companionship of the Son of man who "came to seek and to save that which was lost." No degree of other success in the ministry ever satisfies the hunger for souls. Rev. John H. Barrows, D. D., made the following remark one day, in a conversation with a friend in reference to his large, influential congregation in Chicago: "There is something inspiring in large audiences," he said, "and something gratifying in the generous contributions of the rich, and in not having to worry about salary and church finances; but I miss the deepest joy of the ministry in not seeing, as I desire, conversions." Hear this, brethren, who may be laboring in obscure places, wondering why the door to a larger field has not been opened to you. If you are soul-winners, yours is a "high calling." "He that winneth souls is wise." "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." There is no work comparable with this. If ever a pastor has outstanding moments of a precious experience; if ever his heart overflows with gratitude and praise; if ever his soul is thrilled with a deep, pure, unearthly joy, it is when he has

been consciously used of God in winning some one to Christ.

The following pages are sent forth with the prayer that the Gospel of salvation therein unfolded and the incidents of conversion related may inspire the readers to dedicate their lives to the greatest and noblest work on earth.

GERRIT SNYDER,

Kansas City, Mo., Sept. 1, 1914.

The Soul-Winner's Gospel

CHAPTER I.

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTENTS.

To JUSTIFY the title applied to John's Gospel as "The Soul-Winner's Gospel," attention is called first of all to its special contents and distinctive teachings.

1. The Gospel of John sets forth, as no other Gospel or book in the New Testament, Jesus Christ as the divine and only Savior. The chief purpose of the book, as expressed by its author, we find in the following significant passage: "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through his name" (Ch. 20:31). The introduction to the Gospel (Ch. 1:1-12) sets forth the divine nature of Christ, His pre-existence and equality with God the Father, His presence and agency in the creation of the world, the Revealer of God, and the life and light of men. In the relation of John the Baptist to Him, the record of which is given in the same chapter, John points out Jesus, not as wiser than himself, or purer than himself, but as the Lamb whose sacrificial death was to be the

salvation of the world. In the record of His calling of the first disciples, each man recognized and confessed Him to be the One appointed by God for the salvation of men. The individual testimony is something like this: "We have found the Messias," "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph," "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art king of Israel."

In the fifth and sixth chapters of this Gospel, the claims of Christ's divine sonship are fully established by His own convincing and unanswerable testimony. The evidence is overwhelming, the logic irresistible, the conclusion beyond a doubt. Christ is "the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person," "the way, the truth, and the life" for a lost, sin-sick, and perishing world. Well may this Gospel be called "the Gospel for a world of sin." Only a divine Savior can bring abiding peace to man. In this Gospel, as nowhere else in the Bible, is Jesus presented in His great purpose of saving sinners. He defines His own mission "not to judge the world, but to save the world" (Ch. 12:47). His salvation is from sin, from bondage, from wrath, from eternal death and from the grave. He is represented as bringing what the world mostly needs, and can find nowhere else, pardon, reconciliation, liberty, peace, power and eternal life. Note the "I ams" of this Gospel, "I am the way," "I am the light," "I am the life,"

"I am the bread that came down from heaven," etc., and one can come to no other conclusion than that it sets forth Jesus Christ as the only satisfying portion of the soul. Some one has truly written: "Precious as the synoptic Gospels are, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that there was no divine Christ until the soul of John, crystal clear, mirrored him to the world."

2. The Gospel of John is the Soul-Winner's Gospel, in that it sets forth man's true condition as a sinner. According to its teaching man does not have to commit any great sins to be finally lost, and finally judged. He *has* sinned, *is* lost, and "hath been judged already." "This is the judgment that the light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light" (Ch. 3:18-19). The final outer darkness has already set in upon the world, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, may not abide in the darkness" (Ch. 12:46).

In this Gospel, we learn that man in his natural sinful state, is spiritually dead, and needs for his highest good the true and abiding life. He is by nature only the highest creature in the animal kingdom, and needs to be "born from above" to see and enter the spiritual kingdom (Ch. 3:3). He is in helpless bondage by sin, and only if the Son makes him free can he be free indeed (Ch. 8:36).

In the winning of souls, these great fundamental truths, so clearly taught in this Gospel, are the nec-

essary steps in the way of salvation. No man will seek salvation unless he grasps, in some measure at least, these foundation truths, that he is a sinner, helpless and hopeless in himself, and that Christ is the only, all-sufficient, and merciful Savior.

3. The Gospel of John is the Soul-Winner's Gospel in that it is distinctively a personal Gospel. It is largely a record of Christ's conversation with individuals. We have here first Christ's conversation with the early disciples and the way they were led to confess their faith in Him. We have in the third chapter the conversation with Nicodemus which resulted in this noted teacher among men and ruler of the Jews becoming a true disciple of the Teacher who had come from God. In the fourth chapter we have the Savior's conversation with the Samaritan woman who was a great sinner, but became a penitent believer. We may learn from this Gospel that Christ did not depend upon mass meetings to save souls. Some of His most vital and precious messages were given to single individuals. One special characteristic of this Gospel is its conversations with single individuals through which they individually came to believe in Him. In this respect it differs from Matthews' Gospel, which contains more the public discourses of the Savior, as for instance, the Sermon on the Mount, most of our Lord's parables, and His discourses on man's future state. If we want to understand better the Savior's relation to the soul of the indi-

vidual, sinner as well as saint, then we must study this Gospel. It is distinctively a personal Gospel. It has a personal message for each individual soul.

4. It may be further said that John's Gospel is the Soul-Winner's Gospel in that it sets forth clearly the conditons of salvation. Perhaps we should say *condition* of salvation, for there is really only one conditon, and that is faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. But the faith that saves, according to this Gospel, is something more than an intellectual assent to the truth, and one must carefully ascertain what John means by believing in Christ. The meaning of that word, the sense in which it is used by Christ and the author of this Gospel, can be learned from an accurate and discriminative study of some of the passages contained in the Gospel where the word "believe" occurs. The first occurrence of the word is chapter 1:12: "But as many as received him to them, gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name." It is evident from this passage that the "receiving" of Christ is synonymous with believing on His name. The belief in Christ which results in a new birth and spiritual sonship, is an intelligent, deliberate reception of Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior, and a surrender of one's life to Him. The act may be illustrated with the marriage relationship in which a woman takes deliberately, a certain man to be her husband, and

gives herself to him as long as she lives. The faith in Christ which brings salvation involves not only the reception of Him, but also the surrender of one's self to Him. In chapter 2:24, we read, "Jesus did not commit himself unto them because he knew all men." The Revised Version reads, "He did not trust himself unto them." The Greek word is "pistueo," commonly translated believe. It would not be straining the sense if one said, "He did not believe himself unto them." According to the author's meaning, then, *believing in Christ* implies a commitment of oneself to him as the man in assuming the marriage relationship commits himself to the wife, and the wife to her husband, or as the patient entrusts himself to the physician. The faith that saves, according to John's Gospel, is not only a reception of Christ and surrender to Him, but involves also, obedience. This we learn from chapter 3:36, where we read, "He that believeth on the Son, hath eternal life, but he that obeyeth not (R. V.) the Son shall not see life." Obedience is not only a vital element in true faith, but is necessary to a correct knowledge and understanding of spiritual truth. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teachings, whether it is of God or whether I speak from myself" (Ch. 7:17). "I know that His commandment is life eternal" (Ch. 12:15). "He that doeth the truth cometh to the light" (Ch. 3:21). What then is the plain meaning of faith in this Gospel? It is the reception of Christ, and the act

of surrender and obedience to His will. The sin of unbelief, which according to this Gospel is the sin which here and hereafter condemns the sinner, is just the opposite of faith. It is the failure to receive Christ, and to commit one's self to Him and yield the life in obedience to His will, and to the will of God.

5. John's Gospel is the Soul-Winner's Gospel in that it is adapted to all ages, all classes, all cases. It contains the profoundest and at the same time, the simplest truths of Christianity. It contains doctrines that confound teachers and rulers like Nicodemus, it has the life-giving stream for poor, ignorant sinners like the Samaritan woman, and it has lesson stories for children, like the parable of the Good Shepherd. The Gospel abounds with assurances of God's love, purpose and willingness to save all who want to be saved.

There is no attempt here to cover all the ground for personal workers, nor to prescribe spiritual remedies for all cases of spiritual ailment, but rather to select the specific remedies that can be prescribed with confidence for the most common cases of sin-sick souls.

The writer claims to be no expert or specialist. His chief desire is to be of some service to young and inexperienced practitioners, setting forth as clearly as possible the saving truths of the Gospel, and illustrating from personal incidents how the

Holy Spirit has used these truths, and will continue to use them in converting souls to Christ.

In summarizing the contents of this Gospel, we reaffirm that it presents, as no other Bible book, Jesus Christ, the clearest revelation of God, the only Savior of sinners, "the way, the truth, and the life," through whose love, purpose, power, and willingness to save, there has been offered for ages, and there will continue to be offered to the end of the world, to all conditions, classes and grades of sinful men, hope, forgiveness and eternal life.

Could we know the history of this Gospel, could we know in each instance what truth led to saving faith, could we have the record of soul-saving revivals, as the recording angel has that record, we would no doubt find that the birth of souls in the kingdom of Christ has resulted chiefly from the presentation of its precious spiritual and eternal truths.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN — EVANGELIST, AUTHOR, APOSTLE.

Among the New Testament writers and apostles, the Apostle John is universally acknowledged to have been the most like Christ. The early Greek writers called him the "Leaner on Jesus' bosom," or, as we would say now, the "bosom friend of our Lord." He experienced and appreciated more than others, the love of Christ. To this, his own love responded in a remarkable degree. He could not have left to the world, the wondeful portraiture of the Son of God, had he not known Him so intimately, loved Him so fervently and grown so much to be like Him. Beholding the glory of the Lord, he was transformed into the same image. No one can study his character without being impressed with the fact that this *sacred writer* had a *saintly soul.*

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the growth and form a right estimate, if we can, of that life which, under the transforming power of Christ's love and the Holy Spirit's influence, was developed into superior spiritual strength and beauty. The Master, in choosing His apostles, selected the most promising natural material, though undeveloped and unpolished. John stood foremost in their rank.

Had he not possessed a valuable natural asset, he could not have become, without something of a miracle, the great, loving apostle.

CHILDHOOD INFLUENCES.

We notice first, that John's life started with a favorable environment. His early surroundings supplied the conditions and atmosphere that give rise to the noblest characters. He was born perhaps in the small town of Bethsaida, on the border of Lake Gallilee. His parents were not rich, nor oppressed with poverty, but in easy circumstances. Their home was out in the open air, and they were not doomed to breathe the pent-up atmosphere of a congested city. Zebedee, the father, a fisherman by trade, had an outdoor, invigorating occupation. The scenery in which John was reared was picturesque and lovely, well suited to awaken in his young imagination what was wholesome, pure and inspiring. The breezes of the hills and of the sea, the vision of the fields, the inspiration and invigoration which came from "God's-out-of-doors" gave the boy a favorable start, and laid the foundation of a healthy body and clear mind. These are essential to moral and mental greatness. Philosophers maintain, not without reason, that usually grand sceneries account for grand souls. To John's youthful eyes nature towered in her most lovely and majestic aspects, and spoke to him in the wail of the trees, in the howl of the winds, in the roaring of the sea. The founda-

tion of a child's education are his early, soul-stirring impressions. John's earliest impressions must have been wholesome and inspiring.

HIS FATHER.

In addition to a favorable early environment, John was fortunate in having a companionable father. There is no reason to doubt that Zebedee was in the habit of taking with him day by day, his two sons, James and John, as he sailed in the skiff, toiled at his nets, breathed the invigorating sea air, training them to industry, and making them thoroughly acquainted with his occupation, so that at an early age, they became his partners in business. Is this not an ideal relationship between father and son? The loving, intimate companionship of a true father is the son's greatest safeguard and blessing. The son who starts out in life without this asset is greatly at a disadvantage.

HIS MOTHER.

The chief blessing of John's boyhood, and that which best prepared him for his great apostleship was his godly mother, Salome. That her influence was great in her household may be safely concluded from the fact that both her sons became followers and apostles of Christ. The record tells us that the mother was one of the devoted attendants of Christ on His misionary journeys, ministering to Him of her substance. The influence of her godly life must

have been great upon her sons. A mother, more than any other finite force, shapes the mind, molds the character, and rules the destiny of the boy. A young life is like plastic clay in her hands. Nearly all great men have had great mothers. James and John were singularly blessed in having a mother devoted to her sons, and at the same time devoted to the cause of the Lord. Let us not misjudge her from the one incident on record (Matt. 20:20) in which she made request that her two sons might sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left of Christ in His kingdom, as if, on that occasion she made a selfish request, wanting her sons to be favorites in the new administration. This is not a true inference. Granting that she shared with her sons somewhat of a personal ambition, there was no doubt a deeper motive than that which appeared on the surface. The incident occurred during Christ's last journey. He had foretold the approaching insults and sufferings. A panic had seized the disciples. Some were disposed to abandon His cause. Judas was about to make peace with the enemies of Jesus. Salome's faith alone penetrated the darkness and saw the clear sky beyond the storm. She desired that her two sons might be loyal to the end, follow Christ through persecution and suffering, make the sacrifice required, and thus win the chief crowns in the coming kingdom. When the matter was put up to the sons, they expressed their willingness to receive His baptism of suffering, in order to

share finally His reign of glory. Their subsequent loyalty was inspired and sustained to a large degree by the clear, calm, unwavering faith of their devoted mother at this particular crisis.

In analyzing John's character, there is an unmistakable impress of his mother's influence. He had much of a woman's nature. He was retiring rather than demonstrative; receptive rather than originative; intuitive rather than logical. He was sympathetic, gentle, loving, kind. These qualities came from the mother's side of the household. Fortunate is the lad who can start life as John did, with a favorable environment, a companionable father, and a godly, consecrated Christian mother.

HIS CONVERSION.

The greatest transfomation that came in John's life, came through a personal contact and relationship with Christ. It is doubtful whether John ever had an experience we call conversion, in the sense of a definite change of life and conduct, a turning about from a life of sin to the service of God. From his early youth, John's face was turned toward God, and a conversion like that of Saul of Tarsus could not be expected in his case. Nevertheless, John had the experience of personally appropriating Christ as his Savior, and definitely identifying himself with His cause. He was first a disciple of John the Baptist, who preached the near approach of the Messiah, saying: "Prepare ye the way of

the Lord," "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." One day Christ personally appeared, and John the Baptist pointed Him out to his disciples, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The next day, looking earnestly at Christ, John the Baptist repeated the words in the presence of, and to John and Andrew, "Behold the Lamb of God." They were so impressed that Christ was the promised Redeemer, the sin-bearer of the world, that they decided to follow Him. They spent that day with Christ alone. It was a memorable experience, the turning point in John's life. He never forgot the Baptist's message which led him to Christ. In the book of Revelation, he refers to Christ twenty-six times as the sacrificial Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. In his Gospel, he mentions the very hour when he and Andrew joined Christ to spend the day with Him. Whether we call that experience "conversion" or not, it certainly was a change in their lives, the day of their salvation. From that memorable day and hour, Christ became a personal, living reality with them, the promised Redeemer with whose cause they became permanently identified.

APOSTLESHIP.

John's first call (John 1:37-40) seems to have been a call to discipleship, or, as we would say now, to become a Christian. He remained in his daily occupation as fisherman until several months

later, when Jesus called him to become an attendant upon His ministry. This was his second call (Matt. 4:21-22). Still later when Christ called the twelve to be His apostles, John received a third call which was to apostleship, and with James was surnamed "Boanerges," sons of thunder (Mark 3:17). Their surname, like that of Simon, surnamed Peter, was indicative not so much of their present qualities of character, as it was prophetic of what they would be and do later through the power of the Holy Spirit.

APOSTOLIC LABORS.

From the Apostleship of John to the end of his long and eventful life, we can give only the following brief synopsis:

1. He was a witness of the raising of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:49-56).
2. He was an eye witness of Christ's majesty at the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-9).
3. He complained to Jesus of one, not a disciple, working miracles (Mark 9:38).
4. He and his brother proposed to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who rejected Christ's mission (Luke 9:51-56).
5. He asked privately about future events (Mark 13:3-5).
6. He was sent with Peter to Jerusalem from Bethany to prepare the Passover (Luke 22:8).
7. He refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23).
8. He witnessed Christ's agony in the Garden (Matt. 26:36-46.
9. At the trial of Jesus, being known to the High Priest, he gained admittance for Peter, but he alone, remained loyal to the end (John 18:15).

10. At the cross, Jesus committed to him the care of His mother (John 19:15, 27).
11. With Peter at the empty sepulcher, he became the first of the twelve to believe in the Resurrection (John 20:1-10).
12. He was one of the seven at the Sea of Gallilee after the Resurrection (John 21:20, 24).
13. After Pentecost he became associated with Peter in the performance of the first miracle, in preaching Christ to the people, in being persecuted, arrested, put in custody, thrust into the common prison, and being miraculously delivered, they continued to teach and preach from house to house (Acts III-V).
14. During the persecution in which Stephen became the first Christian martyr, and the believers were scattered abroad, John remained with the rest of the apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).
15. He was sent to Samaria with Peter to bear apostolic witness to the extension of the Gospel to the Samaritans, praying now that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit, instead of proposing as before, to call down fire from heaven upon them (Acts 8:14).
16. He became leader, if not the chief member in the Apostolic Synod at Jerusalem (Acts 15).
17. He gave to Paul and Barnabus "the right hand of fellowship" as himself a "pillar" in the church (Gal. 2:9).
18. He continued to reside at Jerusalem, having charge of our Lord's mother until her death, which, according to Eusebius, took place A. D. 48.

It is not unlikely that John remained at Jerusalem until the final imprisonment or death of Paul, about 64 A. D., after which he left Jerusalem to reside at Ephesus. At Ephesus, we find him alone on the stage of action for nearly forty years, and completing a life of continuous service for his Master of about seventy years. During his last years at Ephesus, he wrote his Gospel and epistles, and

perhaps also the "Revelation" which he received at Patmos during his exile on that island. He is said to have died at Ephesus at the age of ninety-eight, or about one hundred years.

APOSTLE OF LOVE.

As Paul has been called the apostle of faith, Peter the apostle of hope, James the apostle of practical work, so John has been distinguished by the title, "apostle of love." In justification of that title, the writer proposes, in closing this sketch, to call attention to the nature of the love which was so distinctively the theme of his Gospel, and the chief characteristic of his own life.

In analyzing John's love, we must avoid two extremes — first over-emphasizing his naturally loving disposition, under-estimating what divine grace did for him, and on the other hand, we must not regard him of a natural fiery temper, whose nature was radically and completely changed by grace. John's nature shows consistency and continuity, while at the same time Christian love grew to be in him a transforming,purifying power until it became the very atmosphere of his soul. His love from the first was like a woman's love in its passionate attachment to an ideal. God's love as revealed in Christ was his ideal, and his own nature became absorbed and satisfied in its object. He not only perceived the divine love, but realized that it was for him, and with his whole nature, he was drawn toward it.

He wrote from a personal experience when he said, "We love him because he first loved us." His love to Christ was a personal devotion, wholly lost in its object. Such love is not at first broadly sympathetic with others. It takes time for love to broaden and go forth as it should toward one's fellow men. This explains John's proposal in the early part of his discipleship to call down wrath from heaven upon the Samaritan village which would not receive his Lord. In his personal devotion to One so great and worthy, his undeveloped Christian nature resented the indignity of others. In this connection, let it be remembered that Christian love is not anything, soft and sentimental, incapable of being aroused at times to indignation. When it clashes with persistent wickedness, it may turn into a righteous indignation, which is not inconsistent with a disposition to love and to do good. A man may get angry without having an irritable disposition. There is an important difference between a Christian man angry and an angry man. The nature of the latter runs into gall, with occasional suppression, whereas the nature of the former runs into love, and flashes forth anger only when divine love is spurned and its purpose is thwarted. The sinless anger from a loving nature is like fire from flint which is drawn out with difficulty, and soon becomes extinct. The legitimate anger of the Christian is described by Paul when he says: "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath (Gr. provocation),

neither give place to the devil." While John had a naturally loving disposition, his love toward men was something which had to be cultivated and perfected. If it was narrow and did not fully control him at first, it should not count against him. His love to God was a spontaneous outflow of his nature, but his love toward men in the manner that God loves men, was a growth with him. He felt its force, and enjoined it upon others as a command from Christ, as something that had to be cultivated with prayerfulness and diligence till it mellowed and molded one's life into the character of Christ. "This commandment have we from him, that he that loveth God, love his brother also." John's love, which was primarily to God, was quickened and inspired by the love and command of Christ, till finally he loved his fellowmen in the manner that God loved them. To be like Christ is to be like Him in love. Perfection in Christian character is perfection in love. "Ye therefore, shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." The perfection of God's love is shown in that "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." John's love grew more and more like that, until all his thoughts were generated in that region, and every sentence that he wrote was with a pen dipped in love. He became truly Christlike in his love. Tradition says that when he had reached his extremest old age, he became too feeble to walk to the meetings, and was

carried to them by young men. He could no longer say much, but he constantly repeated the words, "Little children love one another." When he was asked why he constantly repeated these words, his answer was, "Because this is the command of our Lord, and enough is done if but this one thing is done." What a transformation as we trace that life from its beginning; what a wonderful spiritual growth through discipline and divine grace, and what a crowning glory at the end. "Oh wonderful power of love," says Novalis, "Organ of all spiritual knowledge, eye of the soul by which we gaze on God."

"Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise."

CHAPTER III

THE TRUE LIGHT

That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9).
There was the true light even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world (R. V.).

Before we come to the direct and specific application of John's Gospel to the different types of the unsaved, it may be profitable to study the symbolism of light under which our author here presents the divine Redeemer. He uses the word, "light," six times in the opening nine verses of the chapter. It is his favorite metaphor in both his Gospel and Epistles. Light symbolizes most fittingly Christ's advent and influence in the world. The metaphor is taken from the prophesy of Isaiah. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." "Arise, shine, thy light is come." "Nations shall come to the brightness of thy rising" (Is. 9:6; 49:6; 60:1-3).

Our Lord appropriated this prophetic symbolism of Himself, saying: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). "While

ye have the light believe in the light that ye may become sons of light" (John 12:36).

It is not strange that John the disciple should be profoundly and increasingly impressed with this symbolic representation. What the sun is to the material world, that Christ is to the moral and spiritual world.

Without attempting to draw forth from this Scripture the fine shades of meaning that the original indicates, let it suffice to say that Christ is here presented primarily and chiefly as the revealer of truth and of the nature and will of God. It is the chief function of light to reveal things. It has been defined as "That form of energy, which, acting upon the organs of sight, renders visible the objects from which it proceeds." It has also been defined as "That medium in nature by means of which things outside or objective to us are made visible." According to these definitions, Christ as the Light reveals God the Father, from whom He came forth. He is designated as the "Word," suggesting that as words reveal the thoughts of the mind, so Christ reveals the thoughts and purposes of God.

The light of the sun not only "reveals the object from which it proceeds," but also "renders visible" objects in the world about us. In like manner, Christ reveals not only God the Father, but human relationship, duty and destiny. In a world of darkness and danger His light is the guide of our lives.

He is said to be the *true* light. The word true is

used here, not as distinct from a false light, which fails to show things as they really are. The Greek word translated *true*, conveys a different idea. Christ is the true light in the sense that He is the great, original light from which other lights are but a reflection, and are on that account more or less imperfect. Two different Greek words bring out beautifully that distinction. Christ was the true, original, independent light. John the Baptist was merely a lamp or reflector. Christ is the great "Sun of Righteousness" in the world and His disciples are reflectors or luminaries whose light is a borrowed light and consequently, less clear and bright than the original.

Under the symbolism of the true light, our author teaches us that Christ is the clearest revelation of God to man. This revelation is more comprehensive, extensive and universal than is commonly supposed. The true light shone to "lighten every man," even before Christ appeared in the flesh. The first part of the chapter deals entirely with Christ's pre-existence. Christ, as the Light which was in the world from the beginning, was not fully apprehended and appreciated by the world, but those who did receive Him became the children of God (V. 12). When finally the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among men, the grace and truth of God the Father became clearly and gloriously revealed (V. 14). It was a special manifestation as when hidden fire bursts forth into sight.

May we not conclude from the text that God still reveals Himself through Christ, even where the story of the incarnation has not yet been made known? "The Light of Asia" is only a reflection of the Light of the world. Its rays also penetrated "Darkest Africa" before any Christian missionaries appeared as its witnesses. Forign missionaries and the church at large are recognizing that fact today as it has never been recognized before.

The true light shines in every man through his reason and conscience, in his religious and moral nature and in his experience. Whatever of virtue, truth, or knowledge of God we may find anywhere in the world, comes from this same source. God has not left Himself anywhere without a witness.

What is called the light of nature is the light of God, revealing Himself through the dim consciousness of all men. The church does not send missionaries to foreign lands because their inhabitants are destitute of all truth and piety, but because the true light is so dimly reflected among them that they need for salvation, the clearer revelation of the incarnate Son of God; His life upon earth, His teaching among men, His death upon the cross, His resurrection from the grave, His ascension to the Father and His promised return in glory for the complete redemption of His believing disciples. The world could not truly know God until He appeared in some visible form. Idolatry is an unconscious, blind effort to embody the deity in a way that He

may be better known. By the incarnation God made Himself known as He really is. It is proof that He wanted to be known. Christ is His clearest manifestation. We may never know God in any other way except as He reveals Himself through Christ. "He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father." In the Son we have "the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person." The Christian church has been commissioned by its Great Head to carry the news of this revelation everywhere. "Ye are the light of the world." The heathen world is waiting for Christian light-bearers.

"Shall we whose souls are lighted,
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted,
The lamp of life deny?"

The true light has shined upon us, that like John the Baptist, we may "bear witness of that light" and are "sent from God" to carry it to the farthest ends of the earth. It is the privilege of every disciple to let the light shine in him and through him that it may lighten and attract everyone who has not fully yielded to its saving influence. Others can see only what is reflected in the lives of Christians. "Let your light *so* shine." Let the rays be concentrated until many a one is led to exclaim:

"Once I was blind but now I can see;
The light of the world is Jesus."

In the study of astronomy, we learn that among

the millions of blinking stars called "variables," there is one which never changes, Polaris or the North Star, by which all mariners sail, whose light throughout the ages has shined undimmed and undiminished. So in the spiritual constellation, Christ is the polar star of our faith "With whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning," "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST STEP IN SALVATION.

*But as many as received him, to them gave he power (*the right*) to become the sons (*children*) of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which (*who*) were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. —John 1: 12-13.

This passage comes first not only in the natural order of salvation, but also in its significance and importance. It is the center of the Gospel's circumference. There is no Gospel preaching or teaching which does not revolve upon this axis of spiritual truth. The personal appropriation of Christ marks the starting point and indicates the first step which a sinner must take toward his salvation. The receiving of Christ must be prior to baptism, confession, confirmation, church membership, or anything else on the program of religious requirements. When the multitude asked Jesus "What must we do that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29-30).

When a sinner asks "What must I do to be saved?" he must be shown that there is nothing which he

*Parenthetical clauses indicate the American revised translation. The scriptural quotations are also chiefly from the American Revised Version.

can do to secure the favor of God, but to believe on and receive the Christ. When one comes to feel his need of salvation, the natural desire is to do something which will commend him to God, and there are many things which he may do which in themselves are commendable, but which do not bring salvation. An inquirer should never be told to do anything which he may do, and notwithstanding, remain unsaved. He may quit drinking, swearing, gambling, lying and refrain from many other evils, but reformation is not salvation. The difference is a difference between being white-washed and being washed white. Christ's work of salvation begins from within. One may enter upon a course of religious duties, give to church support, attend its meetings, help the poor, visit the sick, read his Bible, keep the Sabbath; he may do all these things and much more, and still remain unsaved. When a man seeks salvation, care should be taken not to start him on a course of good works, as though these would lead him gradually into a state of salvation. According to the teaching of the passage before us, there is only one way for an adult to become a Christian, and that is by deliberately and intelligently accepting Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, and the commitment of his life to Him. Our text is of special value in that it explains what it is to *believe* on Christ so as to secure salvation. *Believing* on Christ is the *receiving* of Christ. The receiving of Christ is the believing on Him as He is revealed in

this Gospel, the Son of God, the life and light of men, the Savior of the world. True belief carries with it the idea of self-surrender, and the spirit of obedience, as was fully explained in Chapter I of this book. Belief and unbelief as related to Christ and His claims are much more than intellectual assent to, or dissent from the truth. It is a personal relationship, and involves our obeying or disobeying His commands, our accepting or rejecting His claims, our esteeming or despising His proffered mercies. The belief that saves is confidence in Christ, and the unbelief that condemns, or leaves one in a state of condemnation is want of confidence in Him. Assent to the truth is important only as it prepares the way for entering into fellowship with Christ. Saving faith is more than mere mental assent: it is a conviction which influences action. You may believe what you will *about* Christ, but you are invited to believe in Him, or as the Greek puts it, believe into Him. Faith is the power of receptivity. It is the open door and open window on the south side of the house of the soul, so that the light and warmth of the eternal sun may pour in on us. In that union with the living Christ is salvation, and nowhere else. No one is qualified to deal intelligently with inquirers unless he has a clear conception of faith in the sense in which it is used by the author in this Gospel. When once a sinner has taken the first step in salvation, namely, believed on Christ in the sense of receiving Him,

entrusting himself to Him, with the disposition to do His will, as illustrated in the prayer of Saul of Tarsus, "What shall I do, Lord?" — which surrender to the will of Christ was the pivotal point in Saul's conversion — then the other religious steps will naturally follow, bringing assurance and joy through the witness of the Holy Spirit. A man must first believe with the heart unto righteousness before the joy of salvation comes through a confession (Rom. 10:10).

The following story of a conversion, which the writer recalls vividly in its esential details, furnishes a concrete illustration of the point which we are here discusing, namely, that the first step which a sinner must take in getting into right relationship with God is the receiving of God's Son, and the surrender of his life to Him. The conversion was that of a young woman who had been attending some union evangelistic meetings. She had given every evidence of sincerity, and had come forward to the altar three successive evenings, but with no resultant light or progress in the way of salvation. It was evident that there should be some sort of diagnosis of her case to ascertain the difficulty in the way. At evangelistic services, there are often too many persons to prescribe without any attempt at a diagnosis to find out what particular remedy is needed. That seemed to be the trouble at this time. I asked permission to have a conference at her home. The request was granted, and the hour

was set. From some inquiries which I had previously made regarding the family I became convinced that this daughter had been reared in a church and family atmosphere in which too great stress had been placed on the experimental part in conversion. Upon my arrival at the home, I found no little prejudice against me, on account of being the pastor in another denomination. First of all, I had to allay this prejudice and to assure them that I did not mean to intrude or to proselytize. I found the prejudice strongest in the mother, who seemed at first jealous at my apparent encroachment. When I ventured the half-questioning remark in approaching the subject of religion that she no doubt would be a happy mother if her daughter became a Christian, she said: "I want my daughter to become a Christian, but when she becomes a Christian, I want her to know it." She quoted the familiar passage, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Concurring in her statement that a person may know when he is a Christian, I asked permission to converse with the daughter alone. I felt that little or no progress could be made with the mother's interruptions. The daughter had been well posted by her mother, and was not to be persuaded into the belief of a conversion unless she could have a definite and clear assurance thereof. When I asked, "Do you really and sincerely desire to be a Christian?" she replied, "Yes, I do, but I want to know that I am a Christ-

ian because the Bible says, "The Spirit himself bear eth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.'" I acquiesced in her statement, and proceeded with another question — "Are you now a Christian?" "I am not," was her unhesitating reply. I ventured further, "You cannot expect then that the Spirit of God will witness with your spirit that you are a child of God unless you have become a child of God." I explained the fact that the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of Truth" and that He would never testify that she was a child of God so long as she herself admitted that she did not stand in that relationship to God. The woman was silent, and gave evidence of revolving new thoughts in her mind, which made the position which she had hitherto held less tenable. It became clear to her that something needed to be done before she had a right to expect the witness of the Spirit. I remained silent for a little time, leaving her wholly and prayerfully to the Spirit's work in her heart and mind. Then came the question for which I had waited: "What can I do to become a Christian?" In answer to that question, I held her to the passage, "As many as received Him to them gave He the right to become the children of God." She saw her duty, took the first step, and soon became an assured and happy Christian.

The conversion of this woman is an illustration how there can be no witness of the Spirit until there is an acceptance of the living Christ. No

one can expect an experience of conversion unless he first becomes converted.

The passage in consideration plainly contradicts the position taken by some who teach that there are four steps in salvation, namely, repentance, belief, confession and baptism. We use the word salvation here in a restricted sense, in which the meaning becomes synonymous with conversion, or becoming a Christian. The experience is that of getting into a right relationship with God, being pardoned, accepted and adopted into His family. The passage teaches that there is but one step to enter into this saving relationship, and that that one step is the deliberate, sincere, intelligent acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and King, and the surrender of one's life in a willing obedience.

I recall a minister in the town of my pastorate, whose favorite and frequent subject in preaching was some phase of Christian union. When asked one time to join in union Gospel meetings, he hesitated and held aloof. On being pressed for a reason, he frankly stated that he could not enter heartily into such a movement, because if the question should be asked by any one, "What must I do to be saved?" his answer would have to differ from that of others. I maintained that the one answer to this all-important question was found in John 1.12, and that there ought to be no difference on that point. In the discussion of this passage which followed, he tried to defend his position by quoting the Revised

Version, which reads, "To them gave He the *right* to become the children of God," which as he affirmed did not mean that they become actually and in a full sense the children of God. Such sophism in scriptural interpretation to fit in with a preconceived notion and theory is calculated to do violence to the simplest and most vital declaration of the Gospel. What can describe more clearly and convincingly the relationship of those who receive Christ than the language of Scripture that they are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The passage under consideration has often proved instructive and helpful to those "who through fear of death * * * are subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15). I remember a good sister belonging to that class, who gave every evidence of being a child of God, but was living in constant fear of sudden death. She had the idea that if death should come to her suddenly, she might be guilty of some sin of which she had not repented, and thus would forfeit salvation. I asked her whether she had gotten her ideas from the Bible. It was self-evident that she could cite no scriptural authority. She was at a loss to account for her uncomfortable belief. I asked her then whether in the relation to her young daughter, that daughter ceased to be her child when she did wrong, and then as soon as she repented of her misdeed, became her child again. The illustration had its designed effect. "Oh," she exclaimed,

"if I could think in that way of my relationship to God, I would be happy all the time." Suffice it to say, that this new conception of her relationship to God made her a happy Christian, living thereafter no longer in bondage through fear. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; (punishment) and he that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). In our changed relationship through faith in Christ, God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline (2 Tim. 1:7). Christ who is the *Author* will also be the *Finisher* of our faith.

"His love in time past
Forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last
In trouble to sink;

Each sweet Ebenezer,
I have in review
Confirms his good pleasure
To help me quite through."

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW BIRTH.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again (*except one be born anew*), he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Except a man (*one*) be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again (*anew*, or *from above*).—John 3:3-5, 7.

In the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, as narrated and commented upon by John in the third chapter of his Gospel, we have the main doctrinal teachings of the New Testament; God's love to the world, Christ's atonement for sin, justification by faith, regeneration by the Spirit, eternal life for the believer, and condemnation for the unbeliever. It is the chief chapter for evangelistic preaching, and one with which every Christian worker should be thoroughly familiar.

It is the purpose of the writer to set forth in this chapter as clearly as possible the doctrine of the new birth, here enunciated, to indicate how it should be applied, and to furnish a few illustrations of its use in personal work.

The common expressions, a "new birth," "spiritual birth," a "new heart," a "change of heart," "regeneration"; all signify the same work, which must take place before a man can enter, or even *see* the kingdom of God. This is the incontrovertible teach-

ing of the authoritative Teacher. When Evangelist Dwight L. Moody was about to preach on this subject at one of his great meetings in Chicago, before announcing his text, he asked all who believed that Jesus taught the truth of God to raise their right hand. To all appearance, the hand of every man and woman in that large audience was lifted. If one believes Christ on other matters, then to be consistent, he must believe Him when He teaches the necessity of a new birth as the condition of salvation. Persons may not like this doctrine, they may ignore it, or it may confound and confuse them, as it did Nicodemus, but no one can say that the Bible does not teach it. An Edinburgh skeptic cut this part out of his Bible, but it remained stamped upon his unregenerate heart, and it was not possible for him to eradicate it from his mind.

The change which takes place in regeneration is wrought by the Spirit of God. The language of the text is "born anew," "born from above," "born of the Spirit," "born of God." Here is a statement of a great fact, which at the same time is a great mystery, but not any more a mystery than the natural birth is a mystery. Professor Drummond, in his chapter on Biogenesis, shows how that a "birth from above" is necessary in the natural world, before an object can rise out of its own kingdom into the kingdom above it. The substances of the mineral kingdom can pass into the vegetable kingdom only when the vegetable kingdom reaches down and ap-

propriates those substances. In like manner do the substances from the vegetable kingdom pass into the animal kingdom above it. By a similar mysterious process Professor Drummond suggests man must pass from the lower, natural, animal kingdom into the higher, heavenly, spiritual kingdom. Unless a man is born from above, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Now if this is the unmistakable teaching of the Gospel, in what way can it be applied by the Christian teacher to the unsaved?

It can be applied effectively in dealing with two particular classes, the moralist in the world, and the legalist and formalist in the church. When the direct question is asked, "Are you a Christian?" there is often an affirmative answer, but when a "reason for the hope" is demanded, the answer is often unsatisfactory. One will say, I am a Christian because I was baptized in such or such a church. Another will say, I am a Christian, because I was confirmed at such or such an age; and still another will give for his reason the fact that he is a church member. Many such persons need to be confronted with the question, "Were you born again?" They need to be familiarized with the passage, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." It is not baptism, confirmation, church membership, or moral conduct, but a spiritual birth that constitutes a Christian. "If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). In this work, God does not repair, but reconstructs.

Christ did not come to patch up the old, but to start from a new basis. His Gospel is not merely to mend people, but to have them grow from a new life. "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible through the Word of God which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet. 1:23). Many a legalist and formalist has discovered through the enlightenment of this truth that he was building his hopes of salvation upon a false foundation. After a full realization of that fact, he has been led to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" The moralist needs this same truth for his enlightenment. Nicodemus was a teacher of Israel, a ruler of the synagogue, a man of exemplary morality, but notwithstanding his superiority among men, towering high above them, in moral conduct, Jesus said to him and to his class: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, *ye* must be born anew."

A clear conception of this truth and its right application is necessary not only with reference to its use in dealing with the unsaved, but also with reference to some Christians to whom the presentation of this subject has become not only a source of perplexity, but of doubt and fear concerning the genuineness of their own faith and experience in the Christian life. The Christian worker will often find persons whose faith is weak, and whose joy and peace have been disturbed by the thought that they have never experienced a new birth. How shall we interpret this Gospel narrative so as to fortify them

in the Christian faith? How can we help them into a true assurance and unclouded hope?

They need to be informed that in their salvation the renewing of the heart is God's work and not theirs. They need to be reminded of God's promise which reads, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezek. 36:26). Then they should be assured that as soon as a man will do what the Gospel requires him to do, God will keep His promise to give the new heart. The mysterious change takes place though a man may not become conscious of it, any more than he was conscious of his natural birth. There are many true Christians who cannot even give the testimony of the Scotch girl who sought admission into the church, and who, when asked whether she had experienced a change of heart, replied, "I do not know that, but I feel that something has changed, either my heart or the world, for I have come to love the church, and care no longer for the pleasures of the world." The blind man could not tell *how* Jesus opened his eyes, but he could say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I can see." That was all he needed to know, to become known as a follower of Christ.

When Nicodemus became bewildered by the mystery of the spiritual birth so that he exclaimed, "How can these things be?" Jesus, the wise teacher, pointed him to the uplifted cross. Nicodemus' part in the work of salvation was made plain when Je-

sus said: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may have eternal life" (vs. 14, 15). Man's part is to look to the cross. "There is life for a look at the crucified One." Having once for all committed himself to the atoning Savior, he need not be concerned about God's part in his salvation. The promise reads. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God" (1 John 5:1). When man deliberately and intelligently believes in Christ in the sense of receiving Him and surrendering to Him, he can then safely trust God to fulfill His promise to give a new heart. We reiterate then that the legalist, the formalist, the moralist needs to be clearly told that there can be no entrance into the kingdom of God without a new birth. On the other hand, the sincere inquirers need to be just as clearly informed that their only part in salvation is to receive Christ. When they have done that, God will take care of the rest.

As an illustration of the foregoing truth, I recall distinctly its application to a retired business man, a typical moralist, hardened against the truth, and hostile to the churches. He had lived and done business in an old town of a few thousand inhabitants, where he knew everybody, and where everybody seemed to know him. Failing health had caused his retirement from active service, but much of his time was still spent near his former business place,

or elsewhere in the business portion of the town. I had occasion to meet him frequently, and had some desire to cultivate his acquaintance, because his four daughters were all members of my church. It did not take very long, however, to learn of his outspoken indifference to religion, and bitter attitude toward the church. This was so pronounced that I had little heart or inclination to discuss the subject of religion with him, notwithstanding the fact that he betrayed an unsatisfied state of mind, and showed a disposition at different times to introduce the subject. I learned from other sources that he had become so pronounced against one particular church because years before that in a disagreement regarding some business transactions he had instituted a lawsuit against one of the elders of that church, which the elder had won against him, a defeat which ever afterwards had rankled and irritated him like a thorn in the flesh. For some time I was careful not to rub up against any sore spots. No perceptible religious progress was made for some time, only that the conversation became easier on different subjects, and a way was being paved for the subject of religion. The time came when his state of health became more serious, and I was told that he had not many months to live. I became more interested in him. I felt a duty, but the task of influencing him religiously appeared hopeless. Never before had I dealt with a man so hardened and unimpressionable. I became

more and more burdened regarding his spiritual state. Praying for courage and wisdom, I resolved to follow my conviction of duty, and talk with him about his hope for the future. My first direct approach on the subject was repulsed with the statement that he could risk his future with many of my church members. It was my opportunity to say kindly, but earnestly, that church membership was no positive assurance of salvation, but that according to Christ's teaching, one must have a new birth. I quoted the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, and applied it. I tried to indicate that whenever Christ gave utterance to some great and fundamental doctrine, he prefaced it with the expression, "Verily, verily"; and that this was one of the occasions when He gave utterance to a vital truth of salvation. Avoiding controversial points, and giving slight opportunity to argue the question, I left him on the sidewalk. He resumed his slow and tottering steps homeward, with this vital Gospel truth as seed lodging in his heart. About three weeks passed, and I heard that he had become confined to his home, which occasioned my next several visits. Each successive call revealed to me the fact that more and more the sandy foundation of his hope was giving away. From several remarks he made, I detected that Christ's teaching regarding the necessity of a new birth had found lodgment, causing some concern, and awakening inquiry. He came to a point where he ac-

knowledged his belief in God, in a future life, and in Christ the only Redeemer, but he did not think a profession of faith was necessary for salvation. With appropriate Scripture (Rom. 10:9-10) I showed the relation of saving faith to a public profession, asserting that what God in His Word had joined together, no man has a right to put assunder. I left him with that truth, as I had left him on previous occasions with some particular truth appropriate to his needs, praying and trusting that the Holy Spirit would use it in the deepening of conviction. The next visit touched on the forgiveness of sin, and the need of a forgiving spirit if we wanted God to forgive us (Matt. 6:15). This was the last truth to which his proud heart yielded. When I called the next day and asked whether he had settled the question of his salvation by a surrender to Christ, he replied: "I have given myself to Christ as best I can, but I do not know whether He will receive me. I cannot confess Him, which you say is necessary, and which I would be willing to do had I the opportunity." He was told that God would not require what he could not do, "But," said I, "are you willing to tell your daughters of your acceptance of Christ?" He was ready to tell them. The reader can now easily imagine the solemnity of the moment, and the tears of joy and gratitude that fell when that father, in the presence of his daughters, confessed faith in Christ. I imagine there was joy also in the presence of the

angels of God. This new joy was the first fruits of an abiding peace and a blessed fellowship, which from that moment became his through faith in Christ, and a confession of His name.

After this, he wanted to know whether he could become a member of the church, although not able to attend. When he was told that he might, he requested to see the elders of the church. They came and, among them, the elder against whom he had carried so long a bitter grudge. The Christain spirit of forgiveness, reconciliation, and brotherhood were never more genuinely apparent than on this occasion. The old man, now a young convert, and a new creation in Jesus Christ, received "the communion" and was enrolled with Christ's followers.

In the prayer services, which were held at his house at his request during the weeks that he tarried on earth, the evidence became clear and convincing that he was "born from above."

Another incident bearing on the subject under discussion is unlike the one just related, but is a no less striking illustration of the change that accompanies true belief and confession. It was the case of an intelligent girl, a senior in the city high school, who in attending special meetings, had become deeply convicted and manifested a desire to live a Christian life. By appointment, I called at her home to see if I could be of service in explaining to her the way of salvation. I found her

ready to make a full surrender. After she had definitely committed herself by a brief prayer, which she repeated sentence by sentence as I gave it to her, I told her that henceforth her prayer ought to be, "Lord, what shall I do?" She seemed bewildered for a moment, and then asked, "Must I not first have a change of heart?" I explained to her that the Bible teaches the necessity of a change of heart. "But," said I, "who alone can change your heart?" She answered, "God." I then said: "If God is the only one to change your heart, you have nothing to do with that part of your salvation. Your duty is to do what you believe Christ wants you to do, and God will do the rest." That same evening, to my joy and surprise when the opportunity was presented, she testified that she had found salvation that day, and that a new joy had come into her heart. She became at once a happy witness and worker for Christ.

"Wouldst thou be saved?
Give now to God thy heart.
If thou dost thine,
Then Christ will do His part."

CHAPTER VI.

DIVINE LOVE

God so loved the world.—John 3:16.
God is love.—John 4:8.
He that abideth in love abideth in God.—John 4:16.

The heart of the Gospel is God's infinite love. His great love for the world is the good news from heaven. To learn this, believe it, to experience it, and then to make it known to others, is the secret of winning men to Christ. Failure in this is like a failure through building a house without a foundation. Every Christian aspirant for usefulness must get his bearing from an unwavering assurance of God's love, or else he may as well give up the task. You can never teach others what you do not know. You cannot impress and convince them with a truth that has not first impressed and convinced you. You can never portray to others God's redeeming love, and Christ the gift and manifestation of that love, unless these are the practical realities of your own faith.

The New Testament teaching concerning divine love may be summarized under several distinct propositions, the comprehension of which is the vital requisite in all Christian work.

1. *God's love is the very essence of His nature,*

the sum and substance of His character. His attitude toward the world is none other than an attitude of love, and with that everything else predicated of God must be consistent. "*God is love.*" The opposite of love is hate; therefore, God cannot hate men, that would be inconsistent with His nature of love. In whatever other phase God may reveal Himself, love is the unity and perfection of His being, and all His attributes flow consistently from that source, as light, heat, saving and destroying influences flow from the same sun. God's holiness is a part of His love. It is His love as it comes into contact with sin. He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil." God cannot tolerate sin. His love is a holy love, which burns and drives away when it cannot heal and help. "Our God is a consuming fire," to those who spurn and do violence to His love. The wrath of God is nothing malignant in His nature, as it is in man's nature, but simply a divine displeasure with that which is wicked and sinful. God's anger comes not from an unloving, revengeful nature, but is "the energy of His wounded love." God's righteousness and justice, according to which sinners suffer the penalty for their sins, are essential in the divine government, else there could be no protection and security to His people. As in human governments, so in the divine, these are perfectly consistent with a benevolent purpose to save all who desire salvation. God then, has no other than a loving disposition and a

gracious purpose toward even the greatest and the most wicked sinners. "Christ died for the ungodly." "God commended His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Such love we can hardly understand unless we grasp the full significance of the definition, "God is love." It is His nature to love as it is the sun's nature to shine, the flower's nature to give fragrance, and the mother's nature to love her child. The idea was once fittingly expressed by an illiterate woman, who when she heard of the wondeful love of God, replied, "I see nothing wonderful in that, *it is just like Him.*" The most learned scholars can add but little to that simple statement.

2. *Christ is the manifestation of the divine love.* God's love could not be known if it were not revealed through Christ. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Herein was the love of God *manifested* in us (in our case) that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10). Christ is here clearly set forth as the manifestation of God's love. Christ did not come into the world to originate a divine love, or to draw it out, or to open a way for it to pass to men, but to make it known. God had always loved the world, but the greatness of that love remained unknown. Christ's advent was its fullest manifes-

tation. He embodied it, declared it, lived it, and gave convincing proof of it in His suffering, sacrifice and death. The atonement of Christ was not to appease an angry God, but to reveal a loving Father. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Christ is the clearest revelation of God, and the highest possible manifestation of His love. He could truly say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

3. *God's love goes out to men regardless of their sinful characters and conduct.* While it is admitted that He has a special love for His own, which is like a father's love of complacency for a son who loves and honors the father, His love for those who love Him does not in the least degree interfere with or interrupt a yearning love toward ungrateful, unfilial, self-willed prodigals. The perfection of God's love consists in that He pours His love like rain, upon the just and the unjust. "He is not willing that any should perish." "He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Through His Son, "He has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Christ had a passionate desire for the salvation of men; He wept over impenitent sinners; He left the ninety and nine to restore the one sheep that was lost in the wilderness. This love for the unsaved is an unchangeable love, continuing the same despite man's unresponsiveness, hostility, spurning, rejection, and hardening of heart. It is no more affected by man's character and conduct

than the sunlight is affected by the ugly things in nature, which fail to absorb his rays, and refuse to be blessed and beautified by his benign influence. The sinful deeds of men can no more prevent the continuous outflow of God's love toward them than the passing clouds can keep the sun from shining above them, and breaking through them to reach the world below. Rev. Charles Spurgeon once visited a man in the country whose weathervane bore the inscription, "God is Love." "Do you mean to proclaim," said the preacher, "that God's love is as changeable as the wind?" "No," was the instant reply. "I mean to say that *God is love*, no matter from what direction the wind may blow." This love of God, being the spontaneous outflow from the greatness and richness of His own nature, does not wait for man to become worthy of it — that can never come to pass. It is not man's *worth*, but his *need* which appeals to it, and calls it forth. Gypsy Smith has well said that Christ is at His best when He is in the presence of a great sinner. This great unchangeable, yearning love on the part of Deity towards sinful, rebellious men, finds no parallel in any religious literature outside the New Testament revelation. The doctrine, though the life and glory of the Gospel, seems almost incredible. One of the worst things about sin is that it incapacitates men to believe that God loves them in spite of their sins.

In this connection, let it be further remembered

that God's love for sinners is not a purposeless love. It is something more than good will or benevolence. It is the nature of true love to seek the welfare of its object. A teacher who is merely good natured and kind will accomplish little good. But if he loves his pupils, he will seek their highest welfare. This means incessant vigilance, careful discipline, painstaking instruction, self-denial and self-sacrifice, always having in mind future beneficent effects. The same is true of parents who really love their children. It will lead them to toil and suffer and sacrifice for the good of their children. Sacrifice is both the evidence and the measure of a true love. *God so loves the world.* His love goes out to the erring to reclaim and to restore them. It goes out toward the weak, not to tolerate weakness, but to impart strength and hope. It goes out to the rebellious not to condone or overlook their sinfulness, but to bring them to repentance and salvation. It goes out to all men regardless of their characters, to build them up in a Christlike character and manhood. Till that purpose is accomplished, divine love cannot be satisfied. The sun shines upon our dead world for no other purpose than to produce life, beauty and fruitage. In the same way, God's love is bestowed upon all men alike, and without cessation, to be a life-giving, soul-saving, character-building, purifying power.

4. *God's love is a personal love for each separate individual.* Without its personal quality, it

could have little value or appreciation. Vague good will is too impersonal to win men. Love becomes a power and help only when it selects, individualizes and centers upon one person, as if there were no others within its reach. God's love for the world suggests to many minds something vague and indefinite, as if the individual were wholly lost in the mass. But not so. It goes out to men as single entities. Each person may appropriate it as if it were meant for him alone. The sun shines on a broad range of verdure, but each particular tree regardless of other trees in the orchard, appropriates the sunbeams, absords the light, and is thus brought to blossom and bear fruit. A mother loves all her children, not with a general love, but with something special and definite for each child. The individual child is not lost in the family group, but is a part of that circle, and receives to its full capacity the parental love. Like that is the love of God. The world is made up of individual human beings, to whom God's love becomes of value, when it becomes exclusive in a sense; when it selects and individualizes so that the sinner can feel that it is fixed upon him, and the believer can say, "He died for me."

"I've found a Friend: Oh, such a Friend.
He loved me ere I knew Him:
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him:

And round my heart still closely twine,
Those ties which naught can sever;
For I am His, and He is mine,
For ever and for ever."

5. *God's love in the heart and life of the believer constitutes divine likeness.* "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7).

Christian love is a divine love implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is a love for sinners that seeks their welfare, just as God's love is a love for sinners seeking their salvation. It comes from a renewed nature in which the image or likeness of God, marred and almost obliterated by sin, is reproduced and the children of God come to resemble again their heavenly Father. "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye, do not even the publicans the same." "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust. Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (see Matt. 5.43-48).

Christian perfection, as taught in the Sermon on the Mount, is perfection of love. It is God's perfect love embedded in the nature and embodied in the life of the believer. To be godlike is to be like God in His love to all men seeking their salvation. "God is love; and he that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God abideth in him" (1 John 4.16).

6. *The love of God incarnated in human lives is the greatest power for good in the world.* It is the greatest character-builder. It surpasses knowledge, courage, faith. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth" (1 Cor. 8:1). "Love suffereth long and is kind; Love envieth not; Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil * * * beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13).

Love is the supreme qualification for soul-winning. Before it, the hardest hearts will melt. It was the power which pierced the heart of Jerry McAuley and converted him to Christ. He in turn opened his heart to receive that love, and with the messages, "God loves you," and "I love you," he brought hope and salvation to the most hardened and wretched sinners. There is no power in the world like the power of love. No matter how far men may be morally estranged from their Maker, if they can once be convinced that the God whom they have hated loves them still with a deep, tender, incomparable love, they will be irresistibly drawn to Him.

This then, is the summary of John's teaching concerning divine love: "God is Love." He is love above everything else expressive of His character. His love flows freely and spontaneously from the richness and greatness of His nature, and reaches

all men regardless of their sin and unworthiness. This love in the believer's heart, makes him God-like and qualifies him in the highest degree for soul-winning.

"Love divine all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart."

CHAPTER VII

PRESENT SALVATION

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting (*eternal*) life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life (*cometh not into Judgment, but hath passed out of death into life*).—John 5:24.

An upright, honorable and aspiring man was urged one time by a friend to give himself to Christ for salvation. He turned to his friend and frankly asked: "What do you mean by being saved?" The inquiry was practical and pertinent. The man had been reared in a Christian home of exceptional strictness, and his outward life had been molded by Christian influences, but Christianity had not become a practical living reality with him. The teaching and preaching had given him no other idea than that religion had only a future value and in some way the old idea of escape from a future hell, the prospect of a heavenly harp and a golden crown, the portraiture of saints standing before the throne like so many figures, had never appealed to him. His friend was wise in defining salvation as having, first of all, a certain present value before it is to be regarded as a future asset. He said: "By being *saved*, I mean, saved to one's best, enabled to make one's life count for the most, that

is what the Savior has done for me." The present value of salvation was a new thought for the man. It was the right point of contact, and he at once admitted that he needed a higher help to make the best of the present life. Many people need a similar practical definition and conception of religion. They need to know that godliness has primarily "the promise of the life which now is." Christ's promise is "manifold more in this time" (Luke 18:30). He said, "I came that they may have life," which means now and not wholly hereafter. "Today is salvation come to this house." "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which *was* lost," not that which was to be lost. It is not denied that the full value of salvation is in the future. The Apostle Paul uses the word chiefly in the sense of a future perfect possession, but the Apostle John emphasizes its present value and blessing.

There is no one passage of Scripture that so clearly and beautifully teaches this truth as the text heading this chapter. It plainly teaches the following:

First. A person gets eternal life as soon as he believes in Christ, and not when he dies, as is the common, erroneous idea.

Second. Salvation in its beginning is a transition from a state of moral and spiritual death to a state of spiritual and eternal life, and is like the turning point from a deadly disease to returning and increasing health.

Third. The natural state of man will culminate in a future judgment unless there comes a divine deliverence.

Fourth. Hearing Christ's word and trusting the Father that sent Him transfers a man immediately into a state of present and future salvation by which he escapes impending judgment.

The foregoing we believe to be a logical interpretation of the text. While Jesus was on earth, His words were accompanied with a divine power. He said to the leper: "Be thou clean, and straightway his leprosy was cleansed." He said, "Lazarus, come forth," and he that was dead came forth. The centurian confessed faith in the efficacy of Christ's word when he said: "Only say the word and my servant shall be healed." Peter confessed a similar faith when he said: "Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Whosoever hears and believes His word receives with it immediately a life, spiritual and eternal. From that moment, the individual can say and sing:

> "'Tis done, the great transaction's done,
> I am my Lord's and He is mine.
> He drew me, and I followed on,
> Charmed to confess the voice divine."

The doctrine of a present salvation is calculated to give an assurance, joy and hope, which is every believer's birthright. By an understanding of this truth many ignorant discouraged Christians rise

to their feet and go on their way rejoicing. The following incident corroborates this statement.

It was a time of general spiritual interest. There came into my church, one Sunday morning, a stranger not known to the audience, although he was a resident in the city. He was a German laborer, who had been trained in the Christian faith, but since coming to America had paid no attention to church relationship. That morning, however, he was seized with a strange desire to attend some church. During the sermon I noticed his intense interest and attention. It was so marked that his action seemed peculiar. I did not know what he might do next, because at times his restlessness brought him to a half standing posture. At the close of the sermon, and before the closing prayer, I was led by some mysterious impulse to ask whether there was any person who desired to be a Christian and be remembered in the prayer. The man rose immediately to his feet, and said: "Pray for me, pastor." After the prayer he came forward, and, turning to the audience, he confessed that he wanted to get back to the religion in which h was reared, and then said: "Will you all pray with me the prayer my mother taught we when I was a boy?" In broken English, he repeated the Lord's prayer. The formal morning's service came to an abrupt close. Following the service, the brother received the help and instruction which brought peace and assurance. But like Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*,

he had not gone very far when he fell into the Slough of Despond, and needed help to get out on the right side. In reading the New Testament, he had stumbled over the passage which speaks of "Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," and like hundreds before him he felt guilty, and concluded that there was no hope for him. Fortunately, he was directed to the passage of Scripture which was the means of lifting him out of his despondency, and sent him again on his way rejoicing. I met him several days afterwards, and observing his light step and lighted countnance, I asked: "How is it with you now, brother; are you happy?" "I am all right," he replied. "That one text (John 5:24) and the one word in the text explains everything to me. It says, 'hath eternal life.' I though the Bible said, 'shall have eternal life,' and I was afraid I would never get it. But I am glad it says *hath*. I was shoost like a man hunting for his 'shpectacles' and then finds that he has got them on his nose." In all my ministry, I have never found a more apt illustration of a present salvation than was given that day on the spur of the moment by this happy new convert.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRIST'S WELCOME

Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.—John 6:37.

In a previous chapter God's love has been defined as a love which goes out to all men purposing their salvation, regardless of their condition or guiltiness. That thought is here more definitely expressed and applied to the individual sinner's case. Christ teaches that it is the Father's will to make men everlastingly happy (v. 40). To carry out that purpose He sent His Son into the world as the interpreter and administrator of that will. In the text Christ declares Himself to be in full sympathetic agreement with the Father to save every one who comes to Him for salvation. He declares His purpose to reject no one. Whosoever has the least desire to come is heartily welcome. "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Here we have expressed in a negative form more strongly than could be exprssed in a positive form the readiness of Christ to receive with open arms of love the greatest sinner. God the Father has made no exception in His offer of mercy, and Christ, who came to carry out the will of the Father, will make no exception. Hundreds and thousands of

saved sinners can testify to the verity of this emphatic statement.

How can this passage be used in personal work and applied to the unsaved? In two ways.

First, it may be said that an application of the text can be made in the case of almost every one who seeks salvation. After one has expressed faith in Christ, and in his way has accepted Christ, but lacks assurance of being accepted, it is well to hold such a one to the plain declaration of Christ to reject not a single person who comes to Him. Let the person who seeks salvation understand that if He accepts Christ to the best of his knowledge then Christ must either accept or reject him. There can be no other alternative in such a case. If Christ rejected him, the person rejected would be the first and only one of millions who have come to Him and have been saved. That would seem absurd to believe. If Christ's promise has stood unbroken for nineteen centuries, it will remain unbroken in his case. It will admit of no exception, consequently there can be no other conclusion than that of Christ's acceptance. When an inquirer is logically driven to that position it will constitute and remain his strongest fortress against doubts and fears.

But while the promise in consideration may have a general application to all who seek salvation, it is to be prescribed chiefly as the Gospel's specific in the case of one who despairs of his salvation. He feels, perhaps, that having continued so long in

sin, there is no hope for his redemption. He has sinned against the light of truth and against the love of God. From the loftiest heights of privilege he has descended to shameful depths of degradation. After repeated efforts to rise he has only sunk lower. His whole life has been wasted and there seems nothing before him but to submit to the inevitable and suffer the just penalty for sin. He stands on the verge of hopelessness. He has not only gone the full length himself, but has taken with him others whose lives are as miserable and hopeless as his own.

It is not easy to convince such a one that God is still waiting to be gracious; that there is forgiveness even for those "whose sins are like scarlet," and "red like crimson," colors in cloth which can hardly be removed without destroying the cloth itself. Yes, that is the promise of our compassionate God.

> "While the lamp holds out to burn,
> The vilest sinner may return."

The soul-winner who believes this with his whole heart and takes this Gospel message to those who have fallen to the lowest depths of sin will find that Christ "came to seek and to save that which was lost," "calling not the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He has never cast any one out and never will. "When God made promise," says the writer to the Hebrews (Ch. 6:13-18), "He inter-

posed with an oath, that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." Again: "Wherefore, also, He is able to save to the uttermost (lit. completely) them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). "God hath shut up all unto disobedience that he might have mercy upon all." "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom. 11: 32, 33).

What an encouragement there is given here to go where sin has wrought its greatest desolation, where sinners have fallen to their lowest depths of infamy, hardened, hopeless, "vile and full of sin," and make known to such the saving grace and redeeming power of God. Men like Col. Clarke, Trotter, McAuley, Hadley, Begbie, the Booths, and scores of others whose work with criminal classes and in city slums is well known, testify unitedly that, "Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound:" that divine grace is mightier than human sin: that a rainbow of hope overarches every human being; and that, as previously quoted, "Christ is at His best in the presence of a great sinner."

CHAPTER IX

"OBEDIENCE THE ORGAN OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE"

If any man will do (*willeth to do*) his will, he shall know of the doctrine (*teaching*) whether it be of God or whether I speak of (*from*) myself.—John 7:17.

THE above title, borrowed from a famous sermon on this text, fits appropriately the passage of Scripture which is here to be unfolded, illustrated and presented as a worker's weapon in dealing with unbelievers. Both title and text give in a nutshell the underlying cause of infidelity and at the same time, the philosophy of a sound faith. The Christian worker cannot afford to remain ignorant of its teaching. It is necessary for him to have a clear survey of the battle field of infidelity and to know the different forms in which he will have to meet opposition to the truth. Sometimes, the opposition comes only in the form of common doubt. This, however, must not be ignored because persistent doubt becomes unbelief and persistent unbelief becomes disbelief. Simple doubt says: "I do not believe because I do not understand." It is often honest and welcomes light. Unbelief says: "I do not believe because you have not given sufficient evidence and removed objections." It is less honest and continually asks for more light. Dis-

belief turns away from the light, summons its own cross-witnesses, and throws out of court the main evidence on which the case rests. The doubter says: "I do not act because I do not believe;" the unbeliever says: "I do not act because I am not fully convinced;" and the disbeliever says. "I do not act because I do my own thinking and will not be convinced by your line of reasoning." The most obstinate form of skepticism is the disbelief which intrenches itself in its own opinions rejects the testimony of others, and puts a cap on the very telescope which reveals the domain of spiritual truth. Every form of unbelief stands and waits before it acts, when in reality, action on known truth leads unmistakably to more truth. The only way to increase knowledge is to act on the knowledge one possesses.

The Master teaches that there must be a spirit and disposition to obey in order to understand the will of God. His own life as the embodiment of truth, furnished a concrete illustration of this fundamental principle. He based the accuracy of His knowledge and the righteousness of His judgment on the fact that He sought to do the will of God — "My judgment is just (righteous) because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (Ch. 5:30). "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (Ch. 8:29). Obedience to the will of God put Him in full possession of the truth of God. His obedient life was the answer to the Pharisees'

question: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (Vs. 15). On the other hand, the unwillingness on the part of the Pharisees to do the will of God and live in accord with the truth which they had received from God, stood effectively in their way of receiving the further and clearer revelation from God through His Son. They had the law of God, and observed its letter, but violated its spirit. They kept the Sabbath, gave tithes, were oppressively severe on minor points, but omitted the weightier matters of the law, "justice and mercy and faith." They were "blind guides that strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel" (Matt. 23: 23-42). Someone has truly said: "One of the heaviest penalties of wrong living is, that it blurs, if it does not obliterate, the very perceptions of good and evil." Joseph Cook has stated the truth thus: "In the nature of things every sin against light draws blood on the spiritual retina." Someone else has written: "Sin distorts the vision of the soul. Prejudice bandages the eyes. Bad morals lead to false doctrine. An evil heart is a blind heart. Over the eyeballs of the unholy grows a thick, horny scale which shuts God and His spiritual universe from sight. The diseased eye is pained by the light; and those whose sin is rebuked cannot endure sound doctrine." What are these statements but a reiteration of the spiritual teaching: "He that doeth evil, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light" (John 3:20). "The unspiritual man receiveth not the

things of the Spirit of God * * * and he cannot know them because they are spiritually judged" (1 Cor. 2:14). The Christian worker in dealing with the unsaved must fully recognize this "natural law in the spiritual world." Through sin and selfishness, the spiritual domain is thrown into false shapes and proportions, so that an immoral man, through the imperfect medium of his own life, can no more discern the will and truth of God than he can see the glories of heaven through a crimson glass. To deal intelligently with the spiritually blind and lead them into the light, the Christian oculist must understand that "Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge."

If a man says, "I do not understand your teaching," tell him that that is in accord with Bible teaching, and point him to the text of Scripture which describes his case (1 Cor. 2:14). If a man maintains that he cannot see the way of salvation as you present it, show him that the perception of truth is not a matter of the head, but of the heart (Matt. 5:8). He can get in possession of it not through logic, but through life. As running water purifies itself, so truth is clarified by living it. Hold an unbeliever to the text, "If any man willeth to do His will he shall know." If a man boldly says that he believes not more than half of what you teach or preach, ask him whether he is living the part which he does believe, and if he is not living that, he cannot expect further light. "Be ye doers

of the word and not hearers only, deluding your ownselves" (Jas. 1:22). By a law of spiritual gravitation, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light."

The foregoing principle and law governing spiritual knowledge, I wish now to illustrate with two conversions, one an unbeliever who denied the existence of God, and the other a doubter of the divinity of Christ.

The reader is first introduced to a young man who, at the age of 28, had passed through as much as seems possible to pass through in such a short period of one's life. My first acquaintance with him gave the impression which was confirmed later, that I was dealing with a typical unbeliever, intellectual, proud, self-willed, and more or less hardened against the religion of his godly ancestors. He was the grandson of a prominent minister, the son of Christian parents, and was therefore blessed with a noble Christian heritage. He showed, however, wayward tendencies is his early boyhood, to which he gave free reins while a student at college away from home. It was not long before all religious restraints were thrown off, and like the prodigal of old, the imagined new freedom became the worst of bondage. It may be frequently observed, that those who are surrounded in early years with special religious influences and privileges, and who sin against the light, God is apt to leave to their self-chosen, sinful ways until their extremity becomes His opportunity. When I asked this young

man, who had become known as a periodical drunkard, when he first entered upon such a course, he answered, "When I was at college, away from the restraint of my parents, and could do things without the knowledge of my teachers." Many a young man begins a similar downward course, ignorant of a moral law, as universal and certain in its operation as the law in nature, that, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." From his boyhood this young man had been an omniverous reader of books, a habit which continued through all his checkered career, and the hard experiences of his wayward life. He had, through his reading habit, absorbed a wonderful amount of knowledge, so that it was not easy to tackle him on unfamiliar ground. One day his father came to me with a heavy heart, unburdening himself in the following manner: "My wife told me sometime ago that you had expressed a desire to see my son, hoping that you might be able to do something for him. I wish that in some way you could get in touch with him. He has left home, and has a room down town. He is an expert bookkeeper and accountant, and is quite in demand, but I regret to say all his money goes for drink. Saturday he was paid for a week's work. Sunday he was drunk all day. I fear he is again on one of his periodical sprees, and I hardly know where you might find him. I have thought that a letter from you might do him good. He would get it if you mailed it in care of a certain

drug store which he makes his loafing place." I assured this father that I was interested in his son's salvation, that I had been hoping for an opportunity to have a conversation with him, that I would follow his suggestion to write a letter, and that if he believed in prayer, I wanted him to pray for his son now as he had perhaps never prayed before, closing with the remark: "Our dependence must be upon God." A lump came into this father's throat. Tears formed in his eyes. I left him abruptly that he might cast his burden upon the Great Burden-Bearer, and that the tears might fall, "in the secret of His Presence." The promised letter was sent. A few days later, a drug clerk, a Christian man, appeared at my door, saying: "You wrote a letter to Mr. B., which he received, and he has confided its contents to me. The letter," said he, "has made an impression which I think you ought to follow up in some way." In reply to some further inquiries, I was told where I might find my man. The next morning I prayerfully began my search, and was soon rewarded by meeting the man in his uncle's coal office, one of the places suggested by the druggist. He was sober, and seemed in fairly good humor. After the customary greeting and handshake, he volunteered the remark that he had received my letter, and had thought some of coming to see me. I assured him that I was interested in him, and was anxious to have a conference on a subject that might be of benefit to both of us. He knew well what I meant,

I remarked further, that in discussing the topic of religion with him, I might be at a disadvantage, because he no doubt had read many things which I had not read, and that I had been informed he no longer believed in the existence of God. Somewhat encouraged by this remark, he raised his head a little, and with a cynical smile, said, "I used to believe in God as I used to believe in ghosts." I replied that if he told me what his past life had been, I could tell him what he believed, adding that the belief of a man was largely the outgrowth of his life. "That may be," he said, dropping his head somewhat at this unexpected rejoinder. Realizing that there was no opportunity for private conversation in that business office, I said: "Suppose you come to my study tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock, and let me tell you why I believe in a God. I may not be able to convince you, but I would like to have you know why I believe as I do." The agreement was made, and as he related to me afterwards, he came with his mind made up to believe and act upon everything that seemed reasonable and true.

As I review the incident now, that attitude of mind proved his salvation. I did not know at the time of his resolution and determination, but it became evident later that the Spirit of God had guided to the right point of contact, discouraging as the first approach on the subject of religion seemed to be. The conversation as resumed in my study the next morning was as follows: "Do you say that

you do not believe in the existence of a God?" "Not exactly that," he replied: "the belief in a Supreme Being seems reasonable, and I am not disposed to deny His existence." "Very well," I said, and then asked him this question: "What do you mean by *Supreme Being?* Do you mean an Intelligence above human intelligence, a mind that planned, and a power that created the world?" "I mean that very thing," was his answer. "For convenience, may we not call that Supreme Being, God?" I asked. He made no objection. "Now, which is the most reasonable," I continued, "to believe that He is just, or unjust, holy or unrighteous, kind or cruel, present in or absent from the world, concerned about, or indifferent to the welfare of man?" The reader can easily guess, if he were reasonable, how he would answer all these questions. We then came to the person of Christ, whose place in history he did not deny. After that, we discussed the resurrection of Christ, how it is more reasonable to believe in that than to deny it. Step by step, he was led along until he expressed his faith in all the vital truths of Christianity, including Christ's authority to forgive sin and His willingness and power to save from its penalty. There was no further argument, but a pondering of subjects that had been discussed. Then came the psychological moment for the direct attack. "The question," I said, "resolves itself into this: *Will you let God save you?*" He looked at me but remained silent. I held him to that question, saying

further that he might for a time reform as he had done once or twice before, but sooner or later he would die a drunkard's death unless he let a higher power interpose in his behalf. Repeating the question whether he would surrender to Christ, he, after a long pause, gave an affirmative answer. As he arose to leave, I said: "Do not leave yet — let us settle this matter with a few words of prayer." Seeing me kneel, he knelt, too. After offering prayer for him, I asked him to pray for himself the prayer which I would give him sentence by sentence. This he did. After the prayer, there seemed nothing further to do than to let him go his way, if not *rejoicing*, at least *thinking*. We were holding some quiet Gospel meetings at the time, and I obtained his promise to be present that night. He kept his promise, and when the invitation was given for any one who desired salvation to rise, he arose. Being well known in the community, the prayers of the Christians in that audience ascended spontaneously like incense in his behalf. He came the next evening, and when the opportunity was presented he arose again for prayer. At the close of that meeting he was shown in a personal conversation that his part in salvation was to give himself to God and then to receive from God the pardon and grace offered in the Gospel. That night, through my sleeping hours he remained a weight on my mind, and in my dreams I prayed for him. I awoke with a lighter heart, and with some sense of relief

as if the matter of his salvation was about to be settled. That morning he came to my house with a new light in his face, greeting me with the expression: "It's all right with me now." The resolution to believe and act on what seemed reasonable had led him step by step till he landed safe on the rock of divine truth. "He that willeth to do His will, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

The other conversion illustrating the truth of the text is that of a woman physician in Chicago, who, as a young girl, had made a profession of religion, but afterwards had forfeited her church membership. While later on in life she had again become identified with a church, she remained destitute of any religious experience or personal hope of salvation. She had become more and more restless and dissatisfied both with herself and with her church, until she stood on the very verge of making total shipwreck of her faith. In this state of mind I found her one day in her office, where I had called for medical advice in seeking recovery from a seige of malarial fever. In the earlier part of my ministry she had been our family physician, but I knew little of her religious life. While prescribing for me at this time, she opened conversation on the subject of religion. Her critical attitude convinced me that she was ailing spiritually, and I craved the opportunity to perscribe for her. She freely confessed reading rationalistic literature, which I felt

had only aggravated her malady of doubt and despondency. I felt, however, too ill to enter upon a protracted discussion of religion, but remember distinctly telling her that she would never arrive at spiritual truth by reading and study, especially by consulting the opinions of men who had arrayed themselves against the *saving doctrines* of the church. In the words of the text, I told her plainly what attitude of mind she needed if she desired to know the truth about Christ. In leaving her office, there came to me at the foot of the stairway a strange impulse and conviction that the Spirit of God was working with that woman. Feeling somewhat conscience-stricken that I had not done my full duty, I breathed a prayer for her salvation, and for an other opportunity to help her. The opportunity came a few weeks later when I had again an occasion to pass through the city and call at her office; not now so much to see her as my physician, but rather as my patient. The spirit of God had done His part in preparing her for a full surrender. She was sincerely desirous to know the truth, and "willing to do His will." When one yields the will to God, the pivotal point in conversion is past, and after that the way becomes easy. The human will is like a sash door, the window of the soul to let in spiritual truth, and at the same time, the door of divine entrance. The conversation of a few weeks previous was easily resumed. "Doctor," said I, "do you really want to know the truth about Christ

whether He was only human or really the Son of God and Savior of men?" "Yes, I do," was the immediate and positive answer. "Then," said I, "let us pray about this matter before anyone comes and interrupts our conversation." The brief prayer which I offered in her behalf, she sealed with a hearty Amen, — a response which convinced me of her candor and earnestness. With some suggestions how she would get further light, I bade her farewell, stating that I was anxious to hear from her soon of her progress in the way of salvation.

A few weeks later came a letter telling the story of her happy conversion. The contents of that letter disclosed the following facts in her experience:

While listening to a sermon on "Confession of Sin," by Rev. W. R. Newell in the Chicago Avenue Church, she felt that she had sinned in denying Christ. When in the progress of the sermon the preacher showed that a sincere confession of sin insured divine pardon, she said to herself, "Why don't I confess?" While in that attitude of willingness and determination to confess, there came to her an indescribable peace, and a consciousness of divine acceptance. Her experience during that service, as the letter expressed it, was like a person sailing into a peaceful harbor after a long rough voyage upon a storm-tossed sea.

Let it be noted here that the lighthouse which first attracted her attention and turned the bark of her faith to the harbor of safety, bore the inscrip-

tion: "If a man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself."

During a pastorate of nine years in a city where this physician afterwards came to reside, she has at different times repeated to me the story of her conversion, that the foregoing incidents and details of her experience became indelibly impressd upon my mind. She has often referred with great gratitude to the time when she found one who met and considered her trouble with a spirit of sympathy and of helpfulness. She had gone to her own pastor with her doubts, but he had simply dismissed her by saying in substance: "You will get over this. I myself had similar doubts at one time." Such advice could give her no relief. It was not her way of treating people who came to her with their physical ailments. I learned from dealing with her what I had never realized so fully before, that the physician and helper of souls must sympathetically meet his patients, study their ailments, diagnose each case separately, before ever attempting to start them on the way of spiritual recovery.

CHAPTER X

CONVICTION OF SIN

When he [i. e., the Holy Spirit] is come, he will convict the world in respect of sin. . . . . of sin, because they believe not on me.—John 16:8-9 (R. V.).

Throughout John's Gospel we have the plain teaching that the sin which here and hereafter condemns is the sin of unbelief. By unbelief is meant, not intellectual doubt,—that may be an honest suspense of judgment and action awaiting further light,—but in the Gospel sense, unbelief is the opposite of a saving faith. If faith means the reception of Christ (Ch. 1:12) involving a surrender to Christ (Ch. 2:24) and obedience to the will of Christ (Ch. 3:36), then unbelief means the rejection of Christ, an unwillingness to surrender self and a refusal to obey Him. Since the advent of the Redeemer, this is the world's greatest sin. According to John's teaching, sin consists not so much in wrong acts as in a wrong attitude. It is not so much commission as it is omission. "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). Sin consists in a hostile disposition before it culminates in action. It would not break out in the life if it were not first a disease of the heart. The rejection of Christ is the heart's unwillingness to be saved, and be reconciled to God

in the only way that God has appointed. This scripturally defined and analyzed is not a simple rejection, but a participation in the crimes *(particeps criminis)* which puts Jesus to death. It is trampling underfoot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29). It is crucifying to oneself the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame (Heb. 6:6). The act of crucifixion was the result of a sin-clinging attitude. The participants turned Christ over to His enemies, rather than accept Him as Savior, and break with their sins. The same sinful disposition which led to the rejection of Christ when He was on earth is the disposition which leads to His rejection today. On the part of Judas, it was love of money. On the part of Pilate it was love of popularity. On the part of the priests and Pharisees it was envy. On the part of the soldiers it was the spirit of servility and desire to please others. On the part of the people it was the love and choice of darkness rather than light. The same sins now prevail, and lead to the rejection of Christ. Unbelief is a sin not different in nature from the spirit which animated the people who crucified the Christ. Whoever refuses to accept Him, shows thereby a disposition to stand by his sins and leave Christ in the hands of His enemies. He thus confirms the action of those who nailed Him to the cross. This is sin

in its most hideous form and terrible enormity. It is the rejection of infinite love, mercy and grace.

The knowledge of sin, as it relates to Christ and His mission in the world, can come only through the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit. "When He is come He will convict the world in respect of sin, * * * of sin because they believe not on Me."

Christ came, spake, suffered, died, rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. The Holy Spirit is His supreme witness. It is His chief function to drive the Gospel truth home to the hearts and consciences of men with such light and power that they can no longer resist and reject. An exhibition of His work occurred on Pentecost when the multitude, pricked in their heart, exclaimed, "What shall we do?"

This conviction by the Spirit is something more than the mere knowledge of sin. Through the law of God, men have ample knowledge of sin, but not of the one great sin which condemns. The Holy Spirit does not need to convince men that theft, murder, profanity, etc., are sins. He convicts not of "sins," but of "sin." Men need to know what a terrible thing it is to stand by their sins and reject the Son of God who has come to save them. This rejection is man's chief sin, and leaves him in a hopeless state of sinfulness.

True conviction is also something more than mere feeling in regard to sin. That often comes when men think of its consequences. Men seem at times

to repent, but their repentance is not so much a sorrow for sin as it is a disappointment and regret that they cannot continue in sin without suffering its penalty. Sin leads to misery, but conviction of *misery* is not conviction of *sin*. Pharaoh was convicted of misery, but his heart remained unchanged. David and Peter were convicted of *sin*, and were saved. Nearly all drunkards are convicted of misery, but few are convicted of sin and converted. True conviction shows us not only our sins, but also the Savior. True repentance is turning to this Savior for pardon and acceptance. The greatest need of the world today is conviction of sin through the power of the Holy Ghost. There has come in recent years a deplorable state of moral calousness and insensibility. Teachers and preachers are seriously longing for, and wondering how and when there will come again an old-time conviction that will result in clear cases of repentance and conversion.

There are two ways in which the Holy Spirit produces the desired conviction.

First, He accompanies Gospel truth. Whoever will be faithful in presenting Christ — all the facts about His life, His mission in the world, His sacrificial death, His glorious resurrection, His ascension and promised return — can be assured of the Spirit's help to accompany that truth, and press it home to the hearts of sinners. He is Christ's chief witness and representative whose only purpose in the world,

and to the world, is to testify of Christ (Ch. 15:26). He will never fail to be present when He is summoned to appear. He is more anxious than we are, that the world should know and believe all the evidence in the case. He is ever ready to confirm every true statement that is made in behalf of Christ by His disciples, and to back every sincere testimony that is given for Him. Without His help, even the truth of the Gospel narrative will make only a transient impression. This fact may be illustrated with some early experiences in photography. The inventor, in trying to take his first pictures, could not retain the impressions. The tablet received the image through the sun's rays, but the image vanished as soon as it was withdrawn from the camera. Something was needed which was afterwards discovered that would arrest and retain the fugitive impressions. By a similar process, the fleeting impressions of the truth must be retained by the Holy Spirit until a permanent image of Christ is formed in the soul.

The second way in which the Holy Spirit produces conviction of sin is through believers. This is an important truth to be remembered. Many Christians pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit to convict of sin, but forget the manner in which He was promised to come. He was not to come directly from heaven, as the rain from the clouds, to influence sinners. His promised coming is first to the disciples. "I will send him unto you (v. 7)

and He,when He is come (*i. e.*, to you) He will convict the world in respect to sin." Many Christians pray for the Spirit to come, but are not willing for the Spirit to come and work through them. The earliest recorded promise of Christ reads: "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." The evangelist adds: "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive" (John 7:37-39). The disciples were to be the channels through whom the influence of the Spirit was to flow to others. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples were first filled with the Holy Spirit, and then the overflow influence brought conviction to the unsaved multitude. Every true revival since Pentecost has originated in the same way. All unanswered prayers for revivals may be explained by the reluctance and unwillingness to have the Spirit come according to Christ's revealed way. The Holy Spirit is waiting to perform His office work to the unbelieving world, but He cannot do this, unless believers give Him the right of way in their lives, and thus furnish Him the channels for communication with the world.

"The foxes have their hole,
The birds of air their nest,
But safe in thy surrendered soul,
He hath not where to rest."

Everyone who has a true desire for the Spirit of God to come and convict the unsaved, must be willing to pray.

"Take my life and let it be,
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

When He is come to *you*, He will convict the *world* in respect to sin.

CHAPTER XI

LIFE ETERNAL

I give unto them eternal life.—John 10 : 28.

This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God and him whom thou dids't send, even Jesus Christ. —John 17 : 3.

"Life, life, eternal life." This was the cry of Christian as he fled from the city of Destruction. It has been the cry and aspiration of humanity ever since our first parents "ate of that forbidden fruit, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe." What we possess here and now can hardly be called life. It is so lamentably brief, uncertain, fleeting, effervescent, disappointing. It no more resembles real, enduring life than the bubble or vapor resembles the limitless ocean. In our present world, man does little more than touch upon life. He is like a bird that touches the surface of the water, produces a little ripple, and then passes out of sight. Is there no fuller, larger, longer-lasting life? If so, what is it? Where is it? How can it be obtained? These are questions which Christ has answered for all mankind, and for all ages.

Listen to His message — "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he

die, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die" (John 11:25).

Hear Him as He calls from the resurrection side of the tomb, saying: "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and I was dead and behold, I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of death and of hades" (Rev. 1:17-18).

Christ has the *keys*, and consequently He is the only One who can open the door to reveal life's meaning and mystery. One of the keys which He has put in the hands of His disciples is His definition of eternal life. It is one of the most valuable keys entrusted to the Christian church. Its special merit lies in the fact that it opens the door which connects the department of religion with that of science, biology with Christianity. The latter is not a mere creed as some suppose, but also a life, and on this account it falls naturally into the department of biological science.

The scientific definition of life and Christ's definition harmonize. According to biologists, life is a force; it is correspondence with environment; adaptation with surroundings. Completeness of life is proportionate to the completeness of the correspondence. For instance, a man who is deaf and blind is dead to a large part of the world; he is not in correspondence with the world of sound nor of sight. His life is imperfect and limited. Life can be perfect only when the correspondence is perfect. Life is large and abundant only when

there is a large and ample environment. The toad has a low and contracted life. The bird has a larger life because it has capacity and adaptation to dwell in a larger world. Man's life is still larger because he dwells in a much greater part of the world. Now, if in addition to this, he can come into a union and communion with the spiritual domain of God's universe, with God himself the source of all life, it follows that he gets in possession of the highest and noblest kind of life. Modern science has taken us to the very portals of the spiritual realm, and has left us with its promises and intimations that if there is such a thing as spiritual and eternal life it consists in man's union with a spiritual and eternal Being. The Bible teaching is not only in perfect agreement with these principles and premises, but carries us beyond them into the actual spiritual domain. It reveals to us the fact that before the first transgression, man was in perfect correspondence with the spiritual world, and with his Creator. Through sin, that correspondence was broken. God had said: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17). On the very day of the transgression, Adam died, not physically, but spiritually. He broke communication with God. If life is union, then death is separation. So long as there is a harmonious union between body, mind and spirit, we call it life. As soon as there comes a separation, we call it death. Thus when man separated from God, a spiritual

being, he died spiritually, and he continued in that state through sin,

> "Till One greater Man restore us,
> And regain the blissful seat."

The life lost in Paradise, Christ came to restore. John's Gospel is a treatise on that life, and the way to its recovery. In it, the word "life" occurs thirty-six times, and seventeen times the expression "eternal life," which in this Gospel is equivalent to eternal salvation. The reference is always to life in its highest form, life spiritual and eternal. "I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Ch. 10:10). "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." The men whom Christ addressed had a certain form of life, but they did not have life in its highest form, union with God through his Son. "As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also, to have life in Himself" (Ch. 6:26). The Son therefore, could truly say: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." "I and the Father are one" (Ch. 10:28, 30). "This is life eternal that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Science and religion have come together on a definition that applies to life in all its different forms, variations and stages of development till it reaches its highest throne where it abides forever with God. The greatest Teacher among men came from God to reveal what the true

and enduring life is, and how it may be obtained. By common agreement, science is knowledge. Biology is the science or knowledge of life. Spiritual biology is the science of spiritual and eternal life. That life, according to Christ's teaching, consists in knowing God, a spiritual Being, not theoretically or speculatively, but sympathetically, practically, and experimentally. Christ did not come to teach directly the science of biology, but in the light of His teaching no biology is complete without God, who is the source of all life. Christ Himself, the Son of God and equal with God, is the root, the branch, the centre and circumference of all biology. To know Him, to be brought into union with Him, puts man in possession of the fullest life. Christianity, according to scientific intimations, and along evolutionary lines, is the truest, highest, holiest, happiest, longest life attainable.

CHAPTER XII

EVIDENCES OF DISCIPLESHIP AND ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

So shall ye be my disciples.—John 15:8.
That ye may know that ye have eternal life.—1 John 5:13.

THE above passages, with many others that might be selected, throw light on the important question whether a person can know that he is a Christian, and be fully assured of his present and future salvation.

That there is such evidence and assurance, cannot be doubted. The Scriptures teach it, men have experienced it, they have avowed it, and rejoiced in it. Christ commanded His disciples to rejoice that their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20). How could they rejoice over that unless there was some way of knowing it. The knowledge of one's salvation is conducive, not only to personal joy and comfort, but also to soul-winning service. Christianity is distinctively a religion of joy. There is no other body of men in the world who can sing as an assembly of Christians. A joyless Christian is a poor soul-winner. When he attempts to recommend his Christianity to another, he presents such a weak testimonial with it, that the person is apt to

reply, if not by mouth, then at least in mind, that he has burdens to carry without an additional doleful religion. The old Scotch catechism question, "What are the outward signs of an inward grace?" with its answer, "Doots and fears," is hardly in accord with New Testament teaching. Paul said: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." John wrote: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." In his epistle, where he sets forth the evidences of disciples, he uses the word "know" twenty-eight times. The Greek word "know" is even more suggestive and forceful, bearing the significance of knowing from an actual experience. There are three sources of testimony to prove one's salvation.

(a) First, we have the witness of the Word. The Bible declares plainly that whoever comes to Christ, He will in no wise cast out (John 6:37); that those who receive Him, become the children of God (John 1:12); that those who "believe on Him have everlasting life" (John 5:24); that "they shall never perish" (John 10.28); but be ultimately gathered with Him in His eternal home (John 14:3; 17.24). The witness of the Word is the witness of God. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater (John 5:9). God will certainly do what He has promised to do.

God's promises have been abundantly verified in the experiences of men. Thousands can testify that as soon as they met the conditions of salvation, and rested upon God's promises, there came to some immediately, to others gradually, but to all definitely, sooner or later, a consciousness of pardon and acceptance. Being justified by faith, they had peace with God. There is no more solid ground on which to build one's hope of salvation than the sure promises of God. These promises we are told are confirmed by an oath, "that by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18).

(b) The second witness of salvation is the witness of the Spirit. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom 8:16). "Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit (1 John 4.13). "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). The witness of the Spirit is not only the consciousness of the divine favor, but love and peace in the heart. These come in the place of doubt and fear. True assurance is a Spirit-wrought conviction that there has come a reconciliation in the place of alienation between the soul and God.

(c) The third witness of salvation is the witness of life. By examining the evidences of disciple-

ship in John's first epistle we learn that a Christian life is a life of obedience to Christ, and a life of love for His brethren. A Christian will naturally gravitate toward Christian company. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3.14). "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John 3:10). "He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought of God" (John 3:21). "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death, and hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3-5).

The scriptural evidences of discipleship and ground of true assurance as above given, must not lead us to an undue emphasis upon these points, as if there were no salvation without this positive evidence. There may be salvation without assurance. We must keep the two separate and distinct. Salvation is not always accompanied with assurance. Some may have the one without the other. Many a sincere Christian lacks the assurance which he should have, by not being acquainted with the Bible authority on this subject. Some there are also who have had the assurance, and lost it through disobedience, or the indulgence of known sins. David is an example. By his repentance and confession he was restored, as we learn from the thirty-second

Psalm, which, chronologically, follows the fifty-first. On the other hand, there may be persons who have a certain kind of assurance, but who have not salvation, but this assurance, if we can call it such, is not in the nature of a conviction wrought by the Spirit of God in the heart through the medium of divine truth, but rather an opinion or expectation, or hope. Their hopes are built on a false foundation. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

We must remember further that with most people assurance must become a growth like knowledge, faith, love, etc. Let us get the full force of Christ's teaching: "So shall ye be my disciples." He had spoken of the relationship of the branches to the vine. There is a vital relationship between the two. The branch's union with the vine becomes stronger by growth.

With this figure in mind, the Master said, as some have translated the passage: "So shall ye grow up to be true disciples to me." He meant that by growth in Him, and abundant fruitfulness in the world, God would be glorified, their joy would increase, and they would thus give to the world the unmistakable evidence of His salvation.

This brings us to our concluding thought on this subject, viz., the assurance of our final and full salvation. In speaking of a present salvation and a future salvation, we mean by the former the par-

don of sin and acceptance with God. It includes more than that, but whatever else it embraces, these are the chief elements. By a future, final salvation, is indicated a time when the work of salvation is completed, and the redeemed are safely gathered in Christ's kingdom above, forever removed from temptation, sin, sorrow and death. This final, full and glorious salvation is assured with what we have already attained. It rests on the same testimony. The full assurance will come only when it is needed. Dying grace will be given only to the dying. They can confidently expect it when they need it. What people need while they live, is grace to live by, to grow in, to rejoice in, and to manifest to the world. When they get that, then with it comes the assurance that all future grace will be bestowed by "the God of all grace" and their path "will shine brighter and brighter until the perfect day." The witness of the Word, the promises of God, are no stronger and clearer to receive those who come to Christ for salvation than they are to keep them till that salvation is completed. Christ is not only the Author, but also the Finisher of fatih.

"Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless may we be,
Till we see our whole salvation
Perfectly secured by Thee."

CHAPTER XIII

FAITH WITHOUT A CONFESSION.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also (*even of the rulers*) many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him.—John 12:42.

As we come toward the close of our study of Gospel salvation, it is desirable that we devote a chapter to the relation of faith and its confession. Not infrequently does the Christian worker meet the question: "Cannot a person be a Christian without a public profession?" John's Gospel is not silent on this subject. We learn from its opening chapters that every one who came to believe in Christ made public expression of that faith. We find the first believers' testimonies as follows. "I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." "We have found the Messias." "We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write." "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." We have an account of two disciples, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, whose faith did not blossom out immediately into a public profession, but in due time they, also, became very bold in their stand for Christ. Two and a half years after Nicodemus' first conversation with Christ, he demanded boldly from the Jewish council that Jesus should be given

the privilege of the law (John 7:51). Later he became a firm and open disciple, helping Joseph of Arimathea to bury the body of our Lord (John 19:39).

In the fourth chapter of this Gospel, we have the record of the Samaritan woman publicly declaring her interest in the One who had revealed Himself to her as the promised Messias. We read: "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did."

In the ninth chapter we find a very remarkable instance of a public profession of faith coming from the blind man who had received his sight. He did not hesitate to tell over and over how he had received his sight. When opposition arose he defended Christ and boldly declared his belief in Him as a prophet. "If this man were not of God he could do nothing." He was courageously consistent and open hearted in his profession. His parents, to the contrary, dodged the question, "Because they feared the Jews." Their son was reviled and put out of the synagogue, but the Master rewarded his courageous confession, as He always does, by a further revelation of Himself and giving him an inward strength, peace and assurance, which otherwise he would have missed.

We learn from John's Gospel that between the open confessors of Christ and His bitter opponents, there were some who "believed in him, but, because

of the Pharisees, they did not confess him lest they should be put out of the synagogue." The author accounts for their unwillingness to confess by saying: 'They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." What a comment that is on their cowardly, inconsistent attitude. A faith that refuses to become publicly identified with Christ's cause is not the faith exalted in the Gospel; the faith which brings forgiveness of sin, answers to prayer, assurance of victory, joy and peace. Jesus everywhere insisted on a confession. Hear Him say to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16). "Every one therefore, who shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). The Master insisted that those who believed in Him should not be ashamed to confess Him, if in the future they desired to have Him confess them before His Father in heaven. When by faith the timid woman touched the hem of His garment and was healed, the Master was not satisfied that she should secretly take from Him only half of the blessing which He wanted to confer on her, and so He brought her to a confession, by asking: "Who touched Me?" He knew who had

touched Him, but wanted her to have a full blessing, which she could obtain only by a public confession of her fatih. A faith without a confession is a wavering faith, mixed with doubt, unstable as the waves, unanchored on the rock of truth, unfed by the promises of God, weak, joyless, useless. Wherever Christ found true faith He drew it out into a confession. Such faith He nourished into growth. He strengthened it by discipline, and when He saw it triumph over difficulties, He rejoiced in it and was glorified by it. Any other kind of faith than a growing, courageous, joyous faith is comparatively useless. A faith without a confession does not put itself where it can grow and develop. Such faith shrinks from difficulties, assumes no responsibilities, makes no sacrifices, gains no victories, and consequently can be of little or no use in advancing the cause of our Lord. It never does any business in deep waters. It takes no risks. It is a foundation without the intended superstructure, an object of public pity, a constant reminder of an unfulfilled promise. Paul's teaching on this subject is plain. He says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). The joy and assurance of salvation come from a confession. By faith man is brought into a state of righteousness, or of right relationship with God. By a confession the joy and assurance of that relationship is realized. In God's Word the two are

vitally and inseparably joined together. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." The faith that is worth the having is the faith which becomes publicly and courageously identified with the cause of Christ in the earth. His call to discipleship is a call to service as well as to salvation. It is a call to co-partnership in the redemption of the world. It is a call to sacrifice, to knighthood, to heroism and to a final glorious victory.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar;
Who follows in His train?
Who best can drink His cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears his cross below,
He follows in His train."

CHAPTER XIV

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SOUL-WINNING

He shall bear witness of me, and ye also bear witness.—John 15:26-27.

Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you and ye shall be my witnesses.—Acts 1:8.

THERE can be little doubt but that the Holy Spirit as promised to the dispicles by Christ, according to John's Gospel, was not for their regeneration,—that was an accomplished fact—but for their subsequent *sanctification* and *service*. The service to which they were called, and to which all Christians are called, was to bear witness of Christ. A witness is a person who renders public testimony in open court to the truth as he understands it and believes it. A Christian witness is one who testifies in the open court before an unbelieving world to what he believes to be the truth concerning Christ,—His relation to God, His life in the world, His authoritative teaching, His death for mankind, His resurrection from the grave and His future advent in glory. The essential qualifications of a telling witness are a positive knowledge and a consistent utterance. His knowledge must have come not from mere hearsay, that would be expressing only an opinion about Christ, which has no great weight in judicial cases. A true witness must have a knowl-

edge that has come from an inborn conviction, from personal observation, and a real, spiritual experience. The testimony that will convince an unbeliever regarding the truth of Christ, must be a testimony not only for Christ, but of Christ; of a Savior with whom he stands in living relationship, through the in-working, witness-bearing Spirit whose office-work it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto believers.

Christians who desire to be used of God in soul-winning should have a clear understanding of the Holy Spirit's relation to them with reference to their sanctification and effectual witness bearing. Sanctification is the Spirit's work in the believer and for the believer; witness-bearing is the Spirit's work not only in and for the believer, but through the believer to the unbelieving world. The latter we are here considering. The scriptural teaching on that subject may be stated as follows:

(1) *There can be no distinctive soul-winning power without the help of the Holy Spirit.* "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses." The promised power was to bear witness. The chief work of the early disciples was to tell what they knew about Christ. That is yet the chief function of Christian witnesses. They are not to give public addresses, nor are they called upon to argue their case in open court. Controversy is not conviction, and seldom leads to it. All that the believers have to do is to

let the Spirit of God have the right of way in their lives, put themselves under His guidance and control, and by virtue of that relationship, being the Spirit's mysterious conductors, the witnessing power is transmitted to the world. The secret of spiritual power is the secret of making and maintaining proper connection with the only source of such power. The power is transmitted in proportion as the Spirit is given freedom. The command: "Be ye filled with the Spirit," means to give Him full sway, and see to it that there is nothing in one's life to cut off the divine current. The connection must be and remain unhindered. Although the Holy Spirit may have no absolutely perfect conductors, He will use to the fullest extent every one who will put himself at His disposal. His power, like the power of electricity, will run where it finds a conductor, and is greatest where He finds the least resistance and the most perfect medium. Those who try to win souls without reliance upon the Spirit's guidance may as well try to melt the winter's snow and ice with tallow candles, instead of waiting and depending upon the sun's influence and heat. One may have even the right passages of Scripture and fail to make an impression because "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." The Word of God is "the sword of the Spirit." That sword must be left prayerfully in the Spirit's hand. He must dwell by faith in the believer, and be given freedom to wield His own sword, for the effectual conquest of

the sinner. In this holy work there must be the mysterious blending of the divine with the human. "Man's voice, God's truth; man's speech, God's inspiration; a human agent and the divine power."

"The Spirit breathes upon the Word
And brings the truth to sight."

When one fully realizes that truth, there cannot but rise up in his heart the prayer:

"Pass me not O mighty Spirit,
Thou canst make the blind to see,
Witnesser of Jesus' merit,
Speak the word of power to me."

(2) *Every Christian can claim the witnessing power of the Spirit as his spiritual birthright.* When the Spirit of power was bestowed upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, Peter declared, in reference to this gift: "For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." The promise of the Spirit for service is as universal for believers who want to receive Him as the promise of salvation is for sinners who want to be saved. But just as many sinners do not avail themselves of the promise of pardon, so many believers do not avail themselves of the promise of power for service. They have surrendered to Christ for salvation, but have not surrendered to the Holy Spirit for service. They have received the Spirit in regeneration, but when it comes to witness-bear-

ing they are non-conductors of His power. They have not given Him full control. Selfishness and sin are permitted to obstruct the current of His witnessing, converting power to others. Christian reader, the promised power is for you, why not go and claim in full your birthright blessing?

(3) *The conditions for obtaining the Holy Spirit for service are not unlike the conditions for salvation.* In salvation there is, first, God's promise, and faith lays hold of that promise. The person hearing the promise says: "That is for me as well as for others who have received His blessing." With the exercise of faith comes a desire to possess, and that desire is a prayer to God for its bestowal. After that comes the surrender of the will in obedience to a higher will. With the surrender of the will, the transaction is past, the soul is converted to God. Not unlike that experience is the experience in receiving the Holy Spirit. The steps in the appropriation of the gift are faith, prayer, self-surrender and obedience. By these we pass into the assurance of salvation, and by these likewise we come into the assurance of the Spirit's presence, power and guidance in Christian work. The evidences in one do not differ from the evidences in the other. If we can be assured of God's promised pardon, we can also be assured of His promised power.

(4) *The enduement of power for service is a definite experience not unlike the experienc of conversion.* There have been many ministers and lay-

men who have testified, and their testimony cannot be disputed, that years after their conversion, they sought earnestly by faith, prayer and consecration, God's Spirit of power for service, and consciously received the blessing. The experience was as genuine, clear, and even more marked than the experience of their conversion. In the new light that came to them, some doubted whether they were really Christians before. Now, whether such post-conversion experience is designated as "full consecration," "entire sanctification," whether we call it a "second blessing," or "the fulness of the Spirit," the gift of God for "cleansing from sin," or a "special anointing for service," does not concern us here, so long as we admit that there are such experiences, especially when confirmed by a subsequent transformation of life and power in Christian work. But while we must admit that there is a definite experience in receiving the Holy Spirit in preparation for service, we must not doubt that there may be Christians equally led by the Spirit who can not point to the particular time when the Holy Spirit came thus into their lives. Experiences here differ, as experiences in conversion differ. There are many Christians who do not know when they were converted. Those who had no striking experience in conversion may be just as truly and consistently Christians as others. In neither conversion nor in the reception of the Spirit should men seek an *experience*, but the *fulfillment* of a *promise*.

In this, as in conversion, some hearing of the blessed experiences of others, imagine that they ought to have similar experiences, when in reality they should simply take the Master at His word and trust the Spirit to guide them in service according to His promise. A Spirit-filled life is not always a public life. Mr. Kimball, the quiet Sunday school teacher, who was instrumental in the conversion of Dwight L. Moody, was no less filled and led by the Holy Spirit than the great evangelist afterwards, in his evangelistic work. It is a mistake to think that the power of the Spirit is always manifested in a public career. The earthquake, the fire and the wind, may manifest the power of God, but He speaks more frequently and no less effectively in the "still small voice." "There are diversities of gifts, but by the same Spirit." Each one should be satisfied to let God use him where and when and how it may please Him.

CHAPTER XV

STRAY ARROWS

No. 1.

Thine arrows lighted on me.—Ps. 38:2.

Pastoral visitation may be a professional formal part of ministerial work or it may be a quest for souls, in which, through the natural social channels, one may look for psychological moments to leave messages for the Master. If the latter is the underlying purpose, the Holy Spirit will honor it with His presence and His guidance. Seed thus sown often has glad surprises for the Christian sower. Among the sheaves gathered in the harvest fields where the writer has labored, the following are singled out, not only for the joy it gave the gleaner when they were gathered for the Master, but also to attract the reader to a field that is always "ready to harvest," and where every reaper can be assured of wages and may gather fruit unto eternal life (John 4:36).

Among the fields of my labors, I often think of the one where I passed through my greatest trials, and where also I found my greatest joys. Such experiences often intermingle. As I began my work by calling on the people, I called one day on a family not connected with any church. I found a

mother with three little children — two at her side and a babe in her arms. After a casual remark regarding her home charge, I inquired whether she was a Christian. Receiving a negative answer, I tenderly reminded her how much she needed God's help in her duties in the home and toward her children. I learned afterward that this question of her salvation remained with her for months. A week's severe illness deepened her anxiety concerning her spiritual state until through prayer and self-surrender, she found pardon and acceptance. But in her weak condition the joy which followed unbalanced her mind temporarily. The neighbors who were present became somewhat alarmed and called her physician. When the physician appeared at the house she protested and said she wanted them to send for the minister. When I stepped into the room she raised herself in bed, grasped my hand excitedly, and, with wild expression in her eyes, exclaimed: "I know you. You are the minister. You asked me once whether I was a Christian. I told you that I was not," — "Yes," I interrupted, "and are you now?" "I am," was her reply. She continued, "I wanted you to come and pray for us. I want my husband to become a Christian, and there is my neighbor, I want her to become a Christian, and her daughter and this neighbor also, and the doctor; I want you all to kneel down and let the minister pray for us." The atmosphere became suddenly too religious for the physician and he had quiet-

ly stepped into an adjoining room. When she noticed his absence, she called him and said she wanted him to come and kneel down while the minister prayed. This made the situation still more embarrassing for him. Another call, however, brought him to the room. After prayer the patient became calm, the room quieted, and in another part of the house I had conversation with her husband and the physician. I expressed my belief in her conversion. Both remained skeptical and repudiated my diagnosis of the case. Without disputing the matter, I told them that time would, no doubt, confirm my opinion. Making a friendly departure, I left our patient at this stage in the care of the physician. The next day there was a reaction. I found the woman in an extremely weakened conditon. I could have only a few words and a brief prayer. In a low whisper she said: "I have peace and am so happy, but am not yet able to tell my husband of my salvation." From that time on the patient gathered both physical and spiritual strength. As soon as she was able she made a public profession of her faith and became an earnest and consistent Christian. The family moved to another state where, several years later, I had occasion to visit them, and I found, to my great joy, a happy, Christian home, with both parents and children, now grown, avowed believers.

No. 2.

A certain man drew a bow at a venture and smote the king of Israel.—1 Kings 22:34.

"I want you to speak with me this evening. You spoke to me Sunday morning and did not know it." This was the greeting the writer received from a woman one evening as he entered the inquiry room at a church in Chicago, where Messrs. Moody and Sankey were conducting union meetings. The Sunday service to which the woman referred I well remember. It did not differ from our usual Sunday morning service, except that it was a season of spiritual interest when the Spirit of God prompts the unsaved to attend church services, which, at other times, they neglect to do. She belonged to that class and, being one of the first ones present that Sunday morning, gave me an oportunity to greet her and introduce her to a few other early comers. In the few words that were exchanged she informed me where she lived and that she had not been in a church for seven years. She was considerably ill at ease during the service. In relating her experience afterward, she said: "I wanted to leave the church after I had taken a seat, saying to myself, why didn't I go to a larger church, where I could hear some well-known preacher, but something held me to my seat and the first thing I knew the minister preached straight at me." I have an idea that what kept her in her seat that morning were the two Christian women to whom

she had been introduced before the service, and who had taken her into the seat with them and were praying for her. I preached from the text, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The introduction of the sermon had reference to the things of which people were ashamed, and which were not cause for shame; and then the things of which they ought to be ashamed, of which they did not appear to be ashamed. It arrested her attention. The Spirit of God made that truth the arrow of her conviction. The missiles which struck home were some scriptural quotations, especially those from the twenty-fifth Psalm: "Let me not be ashamed, let them be ashamed which transgress without cause." She became deeply penitnent and began to seek salvation. When she desired me to speak to her in the inquiry room that evening, she was just merging out of darkness and was ready to confess her faith in Jesus Christ as her Savior. She became His loyal follower, ashamed only of the years she had lived without Him, but never ashamed to testify to the power of His Gospel in her salvation.

No. 3.

The bow of Jonathan turned not back.—1 Sam. 1:22.

In a Christian household was a son, who, though a moral man and an intellectual believer, was so oc-

cupied with business and the fraternities of which he was a member that religion found no place in his life, except as now and then he felt its claims. He expected, however, at some time to become identified with the church in which his father was the senior elder. He had had many reminders of the uncertainty of life. His mother, sister and two brothers had within a dozen years or so died, — two of them very suddenly. Fresh in his mind was the sudden death of the cashier of the bank, whose assistant he had been for several years. Meeting this young man one afternoon in the postoffice and speaking of the death which had shocked the entire community, I remarked: "Have you ever thought how little there is in this world to depend upon, and how soon all may end?" "You are right," he said, "I have been thinking about this considerably, and especially lately." Our conversation was interrupted and I went home, but not satisfied with a bare reference to a subject of such vital importance. That evening, as I sat reading at my library table, my mind constantly reverted to the conversation in the postoffice with the young man. I said to myself, "He seems approachable and sometime, perhaps tomorrow, I will try to follow up this conversation." Suddenly it occurred to me that the devil always whispers, "some day;" I threw my book upon the table, telephoned the young man at once, asking him to come to my study after banking hours the following day, that I would like to see

him a short time on some important business. He consented, set the time, kept his promise, wondering what important business I might want to discuss with him. He acknowledged later that he had some faint suspicion that I wanted to talk with him about joining the church. But that was not my chief object; I wanted to ascertain to what extent he had thought of his personal relationship to Christ, and whether the time had not come when he ought to settle that question. He said that he had thought about this matter seriously and had made up his mind to tell his father on his seventieth birthday, which they were about to celebrate, that he intended in the near future to identify himself with the church. I expressed my gratification with that intention, but told him that an important step should precede joining the church. "What is that?" was his honest question. It gave me the opportunity to explain clearly the necessity of personally accepting Christ and surrendering, unreservedly, to Him. "After that," I said, "you may publicly confess your faith in Christ by uniting with the church." He did not know whether he had ever personally appropriated Christ. I explained this point a little further and then suggested the propriety, since we two were alone, to settle this matter through faith and prayer. He was silent, but mentally assented and knelt with me in prayer. After I had prayed I requested him to pray. Sometimes an inquirer will say that he does not know

how to pray, and in that case, one can have him repeat a prayer that is given sentence by sentence. But my friend responded instantly to my request and with a child-like faith and simplicity he committed himself to the Christ, thanking God for that meeting with the pastor. After that definite act of surrender, there came immediately a peace and satisfaction, and he went home feeling that the question was rightly and definitely settled. He could not wait for his father's birthday to tell him the news. A week or so later he made a public profession of his faith. With a new life-purpose before him, he became, and continues to the present, a faithful and loyal supporter of the church.

No. 4.

With an arrow suddenly shall they be wounded.—Ps. 64 : 7.

In a previous chapter on "Conviction of Sin," the writer has endeavored to explain that conviction of sin is not mere feeling on the subject of sin, nor remorse on account of the consequences of sin, and that saving faith is not mere intellectual assent to religious truth. Many persons are wounded with the arrows of conviction who never truly surrender and believe. A sad instance of this occurred in my ministry when a periodical drunkard came under the influence of the Gospel and sought salvation. He seemed an earnest seeker, but his failure to find peace proved that the salvation which he

sought was not so much a salvation from sin as from misery which sin had entailed. He lodged and boarded with the family of a married brother, all professing Christians. On account of his drunken sprees, he was not on good terms with his brother, and much less with his sister-in-law. Several Christians became deeply interested in this man's salvation for he was, physically and intellectually, a fine specimen of manhood, well-known in the community. Had he come into the true light and liberty, he might have become a power for good in saving others. For several weeks he attended special meetings where the way of salvation was fully explained, but something kept him out of the kingdom. He expressed a willingness to unite with the church, but was not encouraged to take that step until he came first into right relationship with God. In a conversation with him one Saturday afternoon, the difficulty which stood in his way suddenly appeared when a reference was made to the necessity of the spirit of forgiveness if one desires God's forgiveness. The question was asked whether he cherished any bitterness toward his brother's family, where he made his home. At this suggestion the eyes of the man who seemed so docile and penitent before, suddenly flashed fire as he contemptuously remarked. "They are beneath me; they are not worthy of my notice, much less forgiveness." I replied at once: "That explains your difficulty. If you harbor a spirit like that, you can-

not expect to be forgiven by God. The Savior's teaching is plain on that subject," I said; "'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." This arrow of God's truth wounded him and he went away dejected in spirit. As a suffering patient, rejecting the drastic means prescribed for recovery, is apt to turn to another physician for a more soothing remedy, so this man went to the church officers with his difficulty. Had they understood the vital point at issue and emphasized the same condition of salvation, the man might have surrendered. But instead, they centered his attention on the promise found in John 5:24, saying: "If you believe this you have eternal life." The man, apparently penitent and earnestly desiring a different life, said he believed, and wanted to know what else he could do. This consultation, with new physicions, took place in the church one Sunday morning before the service, when new members were to be publicly received. The pastor yielded to his session, who decided to receive this man, with others, into the church fellowship. But he has had reason to regret ever afterwards that he did not stand firm by his convictions when he tried to show his officers the barrier in this man's way of genuine conversion. The man came into the church without the consciousness of God's pardon and peace, and without change of heart. He attended church services with some degree of regularity for some months, then he began to neglect

them. We next heard of his association on the Lord's Day with worldly men. He drifted more and more away until he fell back into his old life of periodical drunkenness. All efforts to save him proved futile, and one morning his death, which occurred in a lodging room above a saloon after a drunken spree, was announced in the paper. He had been wounded by God's arrows, but stubbornly refused to surrender on one vital point of salvation, and, failing in this, he turned back to the world.

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

No. 5.

Thine arrows are sharp.—Ps. 45:5.

In one of my pastorates I had, among the regular attendants upon the Sunday services, although not a professing Christian, a young physician, tall, well-dressed, and rather conspicuous, if not aristocratic, in his general appearance. He had married a Christian woman in the East, who, like himself, was stately in her bearing and giving evidence of refinement and culture. She had united with the church by letter and was a devout worshiper. Her mother, who lived in the East, was an earnest Christian. She visited her daughter for months at a time and, during one of her visits, there was an unusual spiritual interest in the church. At the special meetings, which were conducted by the pas-

tor, there was hardly an evening when there were not some who manifested a desire to become Christians. The physician and his family attended these special meetings. One evening the power of the Spirit was especially felt in the meeting; several arose for prayer. But, while the invitation was pressed for others, who had never taken a public stand for Christ, to do so that night, the doctor remained unmoved in his seat. As soon as the audience was dismissed, the three left the church, solemn, if not depressed. To what extent the doctor's wife and her mother were concerned about him became afterward known. That night he remained on their hearts, and on the hearts of other Christians who were making him a subject of special prayer. The next morning I was prompted to go and see him at his office. Several times previous to this I had planned to see him, but was prevented or failed to find him in. It seemed that the opportune time had not yet arrived. This morning, however, the doctor was at leisure and for an hour and a half no callers interrupted our conversation. I had been informed by a mutual friend, who had roomed with the physician when he began his practice, that at night before retiring his habit was to read his Bible and have silent prayer. That was evidence of a Christian training, but is not always an evidence of being a Christian. No sooner had I started the conversation when the doctor intimated that he had about decided to unite with the church.

He thought that was the right thing for him to do. I advised him not to do so unless he was sure of being a Christian. That brought up the question of assurance, how a person can know that he is a Christian. During the discussion of this question he again intimated that he was willing to unite with the church. But I replied again that I had not come to ask him to unite with the church, unless he believed himself to be a Christian, "and so far," I remarked, "you have not taken a stand with Christian people, nor expressed a desire to become a Christian." The latter remark was calculated to draw him out with reference to the conduct of the meetings at the church, which he had attended. It had the right effect. He said he did not believe much in a public stand, and did not think it was necessary, if one desired to be a Christian, to manifest that desire by rising publicly, for prayer. "I agree with you, doctor," said I. "Many persons have become Christians in other ways. But if you have made up your mind that you will not take that stand, then you are standing in your own light, and may never come to an assurance of salvation." I cited cases where persons permitted some form of pride to stand in their way, who continued in the dark until that pride was laid aside, adding: "If I were not a Christian, it seems to me I would be willing to do anything that might be suggested to be a step toward the light." Silently he seemed to admit that his attitude on this subject was not the

right attiude. He was prepared for the next question, which was asked with sympathy and tenderness, for it seemed that the Spirit had now "broken every barrier down," "Would you really like to become a Christian in God's way?" I asked, "and know that he has accepted you?" "I would," was his reply. "Then let us have prayer," said I, "before we separate." He locked his office door, took me into his private office, and there before Him who "seeth in secret and rewardeth openly," we knelt in prayer. After this, I assured him that I would continue to pray for him, and that others were praying for him. The swelling of his throat and the welling-up of moisture in his eyes was an indication that he should now be left alone with God. It was eleven o'clock in the forenoon. At one o'clock my doorbell rang, and there stood the doctor with a new light in his face, to tell me that after my departure he had continued to pray and had gotten the assurance of pardon and acceptance.

The foregoing is only one side of the story of this man's conversion. There is another part which must not be omitted from the record, for I am certain it fills an important part of what the Recording Angel wrote in the Book of Life that morning. About the time I started for the doctor's office that morning, his wife's mother had gone to her room to read her Bible and continue in prayer for his conversion. I did not know this: and she did not know of the conversation that was taking place in

the office. Where could there be a plainer instance of the Holy Spirit's leadings and promptings in prayer and work? At twelve o'clock the doctor arrived at his house and told his wife what had transpired at the office that morning. Overjoyed, she hastened with him upstairs to her mother's room, calling to her before the door was opened: "Oh, mother! the doctor is converted!" They rejoiced, they wept, and gave thanks. The noon meal which followed was "seasoned with grace." There was a new joy in that home, a joy that was shared by others, a joy in which also the angels of heaven participated.

No. 6.

I will spend many arrows upon them.—Deut. 32:23.

During a revival meeting in a city in central Illinois there came from the county seat of an adjoining county a man and his wife whose ages were past the sixtieth milestone, and who had spent more than half of that time in a happy, wedded life. They had driven, through dust and heat, a distance of twenty-two miles to remain a few days and attend the meetings. The wife had been a professing Christian for many years; but her husband, as she expressed it, "had never been converted." Meeting them soon after their arrival at the home of one of their relatives, the writer was somewhat surprised that the man coincided with what his wife had said

in his presence about his desire to become a Christian. They had come to the revival meetings with the hope that he might experience a change of heart. Their free conversation on that subject was rather remarkable. He was an intelligent man, being familiarly called "Judge" in his home town, from the fact that for several years he had been county judge, and had held other public offices. It seemed that his attitude toward religion had always been favorable, and that for more than twenty years he had cherished a desire to become a Christian. After explaining to him the way of salvation and what I believed he ought to do to become an assured Christian, I left them with the understanding that I wished to see them again before they returned home. During their brief stay in the city, they attended all the meetings faithfully. When they were about to return home, I had an opportunity for further conversation with them. The man admitted freely that his feelings had undergone no change by attending the meetings. My advice to him was illustrated with the following story:

> A man who wanted to become a Christian came home from a meeting one evening saying: "Wife, the evangelist told us tonight that if a person wanted to be a Christian, he should do what a Christian ought to do, and he would become one." And then he began to enumerate some things a Christian ought to do. He ought to read the Bible, a Christian ought to have prayer in his home, he ought to go to church, he ought

to go to prayer meeting, etc. He then declared his purpose to do, as best he knew how, what a Christian ought to do. It was not long before he became an assured Christian.

After telling them this story, I asked the man and his wife whether they were willing to pursue a similar course. They said they were, and they agreed that upon their return home they would read the Bible and have prayer together in their home. They also promised to attend the church prayer meetings and other services. Three months later a letter, written by a niece who had made an extended visit at their home, reached me, saying that her uncle had become a different man, having prayer in his home, and having united with the church and being very much interested in all the services. It was my privilege to visit that home at different times during a subsequent period of ten years, and, from an intimate, personal knowledge, I can testify that the man became an assured and growing Christian, serving the church as elder for several years before he was called with his companion to their eternal home.

The man, whose story of conversion I have here related, was a type of many unemotional, intelligent men, who, instead of waiting for an experience, are to make the choice of salvation a business transaction and then calmly pursue the path of duty and righteous living. Here was a man who, as county judge, had sat repeatedly in court, weighing carefully arguments on both sides of the case, and

then rendered his decision. His decisions were rendered without impulse, sentiment, or emotion. These were not in his nature, consequently his religious decision had to be made in the same rational way. The Gospel message to some may be to "Stand still and see the salvation of God," but to others the message must be "Go forward." The conversion of a business man, as a rule, must be made a business transaction, especially if he is unemotional in other matters, and if his attitude is not unfavorable toward Christianity. The change of heart, that some wait for, is God's work, and He will do what He has promised to do as soon as man will "trust and obey."

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